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Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The Committee was called to order at [illegible].30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/48/6, A/48/7, A/48/16 (Parts I and II) and A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/C.5/48/26)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995, said that the 1994-1995 initial estimates totalled $2,749,064,000, which was 1.7 per cent higher than the preliminary level of resources included in the outline approved by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. But compared with the 1992-1993 revised appropriations ($2,467,458,200) the initial estimates were 11.4 per cent higher, comprising 1 per cent, or $25.3 million, in resource growth, and 10.4 per cent, or $256.3 million, for inflation and currency exchange rate adjustments in 1993 to 1995. Extrabudgetary resources likely to be available in the coming biennium were currently estimated at $3,419,600,000. For 1992-1993, assessments on Member States for peace-keeping operations had reached $4,157,400,000 at the time of preparation of the ACABQ report.

2. For 1994-1995, 10,171 established and temporary posts were proposed, as against 10,103 for the current biennium. Thirty-nine upward and three downward reclassifications were proposed in the Professional category. The number of extrabudgetary posts was estimated at 5,200 for support services and substantive activities. In addition to those posts, the Secretariat would have considerable capacity in the form of temporary assistance for meetings, general temporary assistance and consultants.

3. ACABQ welcomed the simplified format of the budget document and requested that further refinement and improvement be made in future budget documents. The structure of the budget needed further review in order to establish criteria and rationalize the size of a number of the proposed appropriation sections with a view to maintaining a balance between managerial flexibility and legislative oversight and control. Furthermore, considerable streamlining was needed of programmes, subprogrammes and functions of a number of departments and other units, especially those established through the restructuring of the Secretariat, to eliminate duplication and overlapping.

4. The methodology used in the preparation of the estimates had been presented to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The most obvious change was the elimination of the revalued base, the comparison before recosting the estimates and the calculation of growth. For the 1994-1995 estimates, real growth had been replaced by growth that was derived by comparing the proposed estimate including non-recurrent resources with the 1992-1993 revised appropriations including non-recurrent expenditure. If the General Assembly approved more non-recurrent expenditure for the coming biennium, the initial rate of growth of 1 per cent would be higher still.

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5. The Advisory Committee did not consider biennialization to be a major problem. It was a transitory phenomenon brought about by the considerable restructuring and redeployments that had been effected in the course of a biennium. There was an amount of $1.6 million added to the 1994-1995 estimate to cover the cost of transferring posts and other services from low to higher cost duty stations. Other than that, biennialization should not be too much of an issue in the debate on the estimates.

6. ACABQ had been forced to examine the 1994-1995 estimates under unusually difficult conditions. That had led to a report which was different from reports traditionally submitted by ACABQ on the Secretary-General's initial estimates. The report was shorter, most of the detailed observations on numerous aspects of the estimates had been omitted and Chapter II, which in the past had contained observations and recommendations on a section by section basis, had been presented in the form of parts of the budget estimates.

7. Apart from the effect of late submission of the estimates, the examination and the related recommendations of ACABQ had been affected by a number of other factors which were outlined briefly in Chapter I of its report.

8. ACABQ had noted that it was difficult to ascertain in some instances the extent to which the Secretariat had complied with legislative mandates or followed guidelines for the preparation of the estimates that the General Assembly had given in recent resolutions, including resolution 47/212. Where it was obvious that no legislative mandate existed for a proposal included in the estimate, ACABQ had not recommended acceptance of the estimates pending the receipt of guidance from the General Assembly on the matter.

9. In the Introduction to his estimates, the Secretary-General referred to forthcoming restructuring and to reviews and/or consultations under way on the distribution of functions. Some of the Secretariat changes affecting the proposed estimates had now been published in reports that ACABQ would examine shortly.

10. In that connection, it might be useful to recall that in its report A/47/7/Add.15 (para. 6), ACABQ had referred to the need for a clear statement of an overall restructuring plan and a time-frame for its implementation. In addition, the General Assembly had called, in its resolution 47/212, for a timetable, possibly in the context of the biennial proposed programme budget, for implementing major changes in the organization of the Secretariat. Unless changes were made in a planned and coordinated manner, morale and staff productivity would suffer and Member States would continue to encounter the sort of difficulties that they were experiencing in the examination of the estimates for 1994-1995.

11. ACABQ was recommending a reduction of $186,473,800 under the expenditure estimates, of which $10,394,900 was provisional. The reduction fell into five main groups.

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12. The first reduction, totalling $92,649,000, related to the rates of inflation and currency rates used in the initial estimates. There had been some criticism in the general debate of the inflation and exchange rates used in the initial estimates. There was nothing unusual in the procedure followed by the Secretary-General. Traditionally, the inflation and exchange rates used in preparing the initial estimates for the next biennium were those used for the revised appropriations for the current biennium. Accordingly, the Secretary-General had used the rates for the 1992-1993 revised appropriation.

13. Those rates had always been revised in December, before the General Assembly adopted the budget for the next biennium. Because of the timing of the submission of the first report of ACABQ in the current year and in order to facilitate quick action by the Fifth Committee on the estimates, ACABQ had decided to incorporate its recommendations on the revised rates of inflation and exchange rates in the recommendations that were now before the Fifth Committee.

14. On the basis of developments in 1993, ACABQ had concluded that the initial rates of inflation and exchange should be revised, thereby reducing the estimates by approximately $92.6 million gross or $81.2 million net. The schedules of rates of inflation and exchange rates by main duty stations that had been communicated to ACABQ were indicated in the table in paragraph 50. Should the downward trend in 1993 continue, further adjustments were possible. ACABQ considered that further savings were possible at those duty stations where high inflation led to an appreciation of the dollar in terms of local currency, a factor which was not always taken into account by the Secretariat when it prepared the dollar estimates of the duty station concerned.

15. Traditionally, new Professional posts had been costed at 50 per cent of the amount required for the biennium and all other existing Professional posts had been costed at 95 per cent on the assumption that, on average, 5 per cent of Professional posts would be vacant. However, ACABQ had been informed that the actual vacancy rate in 1993 was nearly 8 per cent. It had concluded, therefore, that an increase of the turnover (delayed recruitment) rate to 6 per cent would be justified. That would reduce the initial expenditure estimates by $13.2 million.

16. For a number of reasons explained in its report, ACABQ was recommending a reduction of $3 million from the estimates for travel. The Committee felt quite strongly that there was need for stricter control of the travel programme of the Organization and for a review of the level of such related expenditures as per diem and mission subsistence allowances. In that connection, it should be borne in mind that extrabudgetary activities involved considerable travel and often it was difficult to differentiate between such travel and travel related to regular budget activities, especially in units with sizeable programmes financed from extrabudgetary sources. ACABQ intended to revert to that subject in due course.

17. On the question of general operating expenditure, the Committee had queried the level of the estimates for equipment and the cycle for replacing furniture and other equipment. The Secretariat had been requested to review that area of

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expenditure and report to ACABQ in the manner the Committee had indicated in its report. In the meantime the Committee had recommended a reduction of $4.8 million in the estimates.

18. Table 1 of the ACABQ report indicated an amount of $79,434,100 for other reductions under the expenditure estimates. That was due to a number of recommendations in the report of the Committee. About half of the reductions under the heading "other" consisted of staff assessment to take account of the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) regarding a revised scale of staff assessment.

19. As could be seen from the footnotes to table 1, a number of the reductions under "other" had been classified as provisional owing to the fact that some of the estimates might not have been based on firm legislative mandates. An example was the estimate of $3,604,900 for integrated offices. ACABQ felt that since the subject was being considered in the Second Committee, a statement of programme budget implications should be submitted by the Secretariat once a policy decision had been taken. Other amounts deleted provisionally related to proposals which, in the opinion of ACABQ, warranted a thorough review in the context of the special reports which the Secretary-General had submitted or would be submitting, for example, on the subject of telecommunications. The recommendation on the Department for Development Support and Management Services also fell into that category.

20. ACABQ had experienced considerable difficulty in attempting to examine the Secretary-General's requests for new posts and the reclassification of existing posts. According to the estimate, the Secretary-General was requesting a net addition to the staffing table of 68 posts, 41 Professional and 27 General Service posts.

21. The situation was, however, much more complicated and confusing. For example, annex III to the Introduction to the proposed programme budget (A/48/6 (Part I)) gave the figure of 119 for the number of new Professional posts, which had subsequently been corrected to 118. Then ACABQ had been told that the number was 122. That confusion was the result of numerous changes and movements that had taken place since the adoption of the initial appropriations for 1992-1993, including the restructuring of the Secretariat and the attendant redeployment of posts, and the freezing of vacant posts which had then been transferred to other sections or abolished. An accurate and consistent record of those movements had apparently not been kept.

22. Furthermore, the estimates of posts and other requirements had been subject to numerous changes and corrections. More often than not, reference to deletion of posts in a section actually meant the post had been transferred to another part of the Secretariat; reference to a new post in a section often meant the post had actually been redeployed into the section. It was often impossible to know by looking at additional posts in a section whether one was looking at additional posts in the overall staffing table or whether the addition was only in respect of that section.

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23. To compound the difficulty, there were several instances in which posts had been redeployed and then new ones requested to compensate for the redeployed posts. Similarly, higher-graded posts had been redeployed from a section where proposals were being made to reclassify lower-graded posts to the grade levels of the posts that had been redeployed.

24. Many of the proposed reclassifications could not be justified in terms of a change in the nature of the functions involved. ACABQ had therefore decided to deal with the reclassification of posts at a later date on the basis of a report by the Secretariat. The reasons for that decision were set out in chapter I of its report.

25. With respect to requests for new posts, the Committee's recommendations would be found in chapter II. The Committee had considered postponing those requests also but had decided against such a procedure. For the reasons stated in chapter I, ACABQ had also recommended that the recruitment freeze be lifted. It would be recalled that, in his statement to the Fifth Committee at its 24th meeting, the Secretary-General had informed the Committee of his intention to lift the freeze once the budget had been approved. ACABQ had also recommended that in order to avoid the situation that currently existed, the requirements of the financial regulations should be strictly adhered to with respect to transfer of posts and other resources between sections. If the current flexibility afforded by the financial regulations was inadequate, the Secretary-General could always make proposals in that regard.

26. The budgetary effect of the recommendations of ACABQ on new posts and proposed reclassification of posts had been shown in the column headed "other" in table 1. ACABQ had been informed that new posts had been costed at 95 per cent. While that approach simplified the methodology for calculating resource growth, it should not be used to determine the amount of resources to be assessed on Member States. ACABQ recommended that the traditional 50 per cent delayed recruitment factor be applied for the purpose of determining additional requirements for the biennium with a consequent reduction of the estimate by $5,443,400.

27. Table 1 included an adjustment of $6,591,200 under the expenditure estimates, reflecting a reduction in the reductions recommended by ACABQ. Since the initial estimates had been reduced following the recosting, the ACABQ recommendations had also to be reduced accordingly.

28. The ACABQ recommendations on the individual sections were contained in table 2 of its report. Should the footnotes to that table require further explanation, he would be glad to provide it. It should be noted that, so that its report could be issued before the end of the year, the Advisory Committee had in some cases used the technique of provisional deletion or provisional inclusion of estimates. Generally speaking table 1 contained provisional deletions, while table 2 contained provisional inclusions.

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29. Under section 4 resources were included provisionally for 10 posts which ACABQ intended to consider in the context of the separate report of the Secretary-General on the support account for peace-keeping operations (A/48/470). The entire biennialized base amount recommended for section 10 was provisional, pending a review of the reports of the Secretary-General on the integration of the Office for Project Services into the Department for Development Support and Management Services. The amount recommended for the International Trade Centre was provisional, pending the conclusion of discussions between the United Nations and GATT on the best arrangements for the financing of the Centre. An amount of $11.9 million for staff costs was included provisionally for section 21 (Human rights), pending the receipt of additional information requested by ACABQ. However, the Fifth Committee might wish to give further guidance on the matter.

30. Under section 25 (Administration and management), a provisional amount for the Internal Audit Division was included pending consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the Office for Inspections and Investigations. An amount of $5 million was included for training. As indicated in the Foreword and Introduction to the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General had placed considerable emphasis on training. The Advisory Committee was cognizant of the fact that the General Assembly had encouraged the Secretary-General to enhance training in the United Nations.

31. ACABQ believed there was a need for the Secretary-General to submit to it a report on a comprehensive training programme, together with cost estimates and recommendations concerning the method of financing. Such a report should relate the training programme to priority needs of the Organization and show how the expenditure was intended to enhance the operation and management of those sectors for which the training was being undertaken. The information given to ACABQ did not indicate how the proposed training would be geared to the priority needs of the Organization and to the elimination of managerial, leadership and other bottlenecks in the priority areas.

32. In examining the first report of ACABQ, he hoped delegations would bear in mind the tremendous pressure under which it had been prepared and the fact that the estimates should have been submitted to the Advisory Committee in April 1993. Owing to bad planning the General Assembly had been asked to approve the revised appropriations for 1992-1993 in May 1993. The timetable laid down in decisions of the General Assembly and in the financial regulations for the preparation of the budget and other documentation was a deliberate choice by the General Assembly to ensure and facilitate dialogue between the Secretary-General and Member States. When the timetable was not adhered to, ACABQ, CPC and, ultimately, Member States were placed at considerable disadvantage, giving rise to frustration, anger and suspicion.

33. If one considered that 17 December had been designated as the date for winding up the business of the Main Committees in 1993, the Fifth Committee had only nine days to consider a budget which normally took three months to review. In addition to the budget, there were estimates for 17 peace-keeping operations,

(Mr. Mselle)

involving expenditure in excess of the regular budget. Furthermore, a large number of reports with budgetary implications had yet to be examined by ACABQ.

34. The Secretary-General had requested ACABQ to rise to the challenge. The Advisory Committee had heeded that request and managed to report before the end of the year. It was his hope that the report now before the Fifth Committee, which reflected the Advisory Committee's best efforts and had been prepared under unusual circumstances, would assist Member States during the remaining few days to agree on a budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

35. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that the restructuring of the Secretariat had resulted in delays in the submission of the proposed programme budget to the intergovernmental bodies concerned and to ACABQ. Despite those delays, the Fifth Committee hoped to be able to adopt the budget before the end of the year.

36. In response to the expansion of the Organization's activities, the Secretary-General was proposing a redeployment of resources as well a modest increase in them. He was also counting on enhanced efficiency through the introduction of new technologies and staff training to meet the new challenges.

37. While Morocco endorsed the three major objectives of the proposed programme budget, it noted that they formed only part of the set of priorities agreed upon by the General Assembly in resolution 45/253. As the Secretary-General himself had stated, economic and social development, on the one hand, and the maintenance of international peace and security, on the other, were so linked that it was no longer possible to establish priorities between them. The proposed programme budget, however, seemed to favour political issues and the maintenance of international peace and security in the allocation of resources. The sections which had benefited from an increase were overall policy-making, direction and coordination, political affairs, and human rights and humanitarian affairs. In regard to economic questions, the Secretary-General had indicated in Part One of the proposed programme budget that the resources freed by the restructuring of the economic and social sectors would be adequate to finance the implementation of new mandates and requests. His delegation hoped that that approach would, in fact, ensure the implementation of all the priority programmes, particularly those relating to Africa. During the section-by-section consideration of the proposed programme budget, his delegation would work to see that adequate resources were allocated to those programmes.

38. The additional resources allocated to the maintenance of peace, preventive diplomacy and peaceful settlement of disputes, the protection of human rights and humanitarian relief were broadly justified by the increase in United Nations activities in those fields. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposals in that connection, but hoped that questions of economic development, would receive the same consideration.

39. The total amount requested for the biennium 1994-1995 represented real growth of 1 per cent over the revised estimates approved in May 1993. Since the rationalization of the Secretariat and the redeployment of resources had not been sufficient to finance the new mandates entrusted to the Organization, the

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(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

Secretary-General had been obliged to request a modest increase. The smaller amount included in the budget outline had never been intended as a ceiling. The increase should be considered in the light of the Organization's growing needs and those States which had originated most of its activities should provide it with the resources needed to carry them out.

40. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposals to enhance staff training and introduce new technologies in order to make the Organization more efficient and allow it to respond more effectively to the new challenges and upheavals in international relations.

41. The new budget format, particularly the summary in Part One, was an improvement. In regard to the various sections of the budget, his delegation shared the view of CPC that programme narratives should be more detailed and provide Member States with all the information needed for decision-making.

42. Mr. KHANAL (Nepal) said that the delay in the submission of the proposed programme budget and the consequent delay in the first report of ACABQ had pointed up the need to make the budget a clearer and more concise document, and also how much Member States and the Secretariat relied on the advice of ACABQ in discussing it. It might be necessary to think of giving ACABQ more resources as well as working out guidelines for simplifying the budget.

43. Nepal wholeheartedly endorsed the policy objectives outlined by the Secretary-General in his introductory statement. There was not enough emphasis, however, on the economic and social areas. There was also a need to define the functions of the new departments and their interrelationships. The Secretariat needed to explain further the rationale for transferring the Office for Project Services (OPS) from UNDP to the new Department for Development Support and Management Services. As his delegation understood it, the aim was to enable the Secretariat to provide services to strengthen national capacity-building and to implement projects in countries such as the least developed countries which lacked adequate national capacities. It further understood that those services would be supplied to all Member States which requested them. His delegation would appreciate a clear and specific response from the Secretariat in that regard.

44. The Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace" laid the foundation for strengthening the Organization's capacity for preventive diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes, peace-keeping and peace building. His delegation supported the budget proposals in that regard. In addition to their traditional role, peace-keeping operations currently included such activities as the monitoring of elections, the provision of humanitarian aid and relief and the promotion of economic reconstruction and development. His delegation therefore endorsed the proposal to strengthen the Department of Peace-keeping Operations at Headquarters. That was necessary not only to deal with the additional number of peace-keeping operations but also to devise means of minimizing the risks of fatalities in the field. Facilities for prompt decision-making were required at Headquarters, in consultation with the troop contributors and others involved in a particular situation. His delegation trusted that, in strengthening the

(Mr. Khanal, Nepal)

Department, due consideration would be given to qualified personnel from the troop-contributing countries.

45. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness through the establishment of the Office for Inspections and Investigations, the installation of the Integrated Management Information System and the added emphasis on training. While the concept of a "zero growth" budget did not necessarily restrict new or expanded activities or abolish useful ongoing activities, the Secretary-General's proposal for 1 per cent real growth, based on the additional activities and legislative mandates referred to in his statement, merited favourable consideration. At the same time, the Secretariat must provide reasonable justification for the proposed increases during the section-by-section discussion of the programme budget. His delegation agreed with the many delegations which had questioned the methods and reliability of the recosting exercise in general, and its relevance to offices outside New York in particular.

46. United Nations staff who volunteered to serve in peace-keeping operations were to be commended. However, the use of existing staff members for mission assignments could have a detrimental effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of headquarters units. In view of the need for better vacancy management and the burden placed on colleagues who remained behind at the various United Nations offices, thought should be given to using the services of retired international civil servants and national officials for emergency peace-keeping operations. Based on the nature of the expertise required in the various peace-keeping operations, troop-contributing countries and other interested States might be helped to set up and operate civilian training camps in addition to military training centres for peace-keeping operations. The idea of a stand-by force for peace-keeping operations could be extended to a stand-by pool of civilian personnel.

47. Mr. PANEV (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the small countries, unable to play a decisive role in the world order by themselves, were more attached than ever to the United Nations as a multilateral forum in which their voice could be heard and their needs met. They were therefore ready to see the Organization strengthened as a hope for preserving their peace and security as well as their economic development.

48. By meeting the priorities set out in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 as approved by the General Assembly, the Organization was working to establish a more stable world order. However, the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 laid more stress on some of those priorities than others. His delegation believed that all the areas in which the involvement of the United Nations was necessary should be given equal attention. Budgetary constraints should not prevent the Organization from fulfilling its task.

49. His delegation regarded the modest proposed increase of 1 per cent as justified and necessary. It supported the policy of restructuring and streamlining the Organization and strengthening its basic functions in the

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political field, the economic and social sectors, and administration and management. It attached particular importance to strengthening activities in preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peacemaking and peace building. The expanded responsibilities of the United Nations in those areas justified the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, in particular its senior management structure. United Nations activities in regard to peace-keeping, economic and social development, humanitarian affairs and human rights all deserved more resources.

50. The initiatives taken by the Secretary-General to restructure the Secretariat in order to enhance efficiency should be given full support. There had already been a reduction of some 25 per cent in high-level posts, but the number of clerical and administrative posts also needed to be reviewed. The call for austerity by some Member States was justified and cuts in operations should be envisaged, but not in the programme areas that had been recognized as priorities by the General Assembly. The Secretariat should work more closely with Member States in order to identify areas in which possible savings could be made.

51. It was of the utmost importance to the Organization that the proposed programme budget should be approved before the end of the year. That would enable it to enter the biennium on a sound financial basis and to discontinue a number of temporary expedients.

52. Mr. DESSIE (Ethiopia) said that his delegation endorsed the statement that had been made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It regarded the increase in the proposed programme budget as justifiable in the light of the expanded activities of the United Nations and the demands placed upon it. However, increased commitments must not be at the expense of the priorities set out in General Assembly resolutions 45/253 and 47/212. Peace-keeping, human rights and humanitarian issues were currently being given priority. However, many essential social and economic tasks also needed adequate attention. The link between development and international stability and security had been mentioned by many speakers. His delegation shared the view that it was essential to maintain a rational balance in programmes and budget allocations in order to reflect that fundamental truth.

53. The economic recovery and development of Africa and environmental conservation had both been defined as essential priorities. The important activities of the Economic Commission for Africa were hampered by severe financial constraints. Ethiopia was in favour of increasing the resources allocated to section 15 of the proposed programme budget.

54. The redeployment of posts and resources within the context of the broader restructuring of the United Nations could constitute a profitable approach if it resulted in significant improvements in efficiency and better delivery of programmes. However the implications needed further careful study. In his report on the construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa and Bangkok (A/C.5/48/30) the Secretary-General outlined important developments

(Mr. Dessie, Ethiopia)

in regard to construction at Addis Ababa. His delegation was pleased to note that the project was to be continued according to a new timetable. It trusted that, with the improved situation, the project would be successfully completed. Ethiopia as host country would maintain its full commitment to that end.

55. His delegation looked forward to the unanimous adoption of the proposed programme budget before the conclusion of the forty-eighth session.

56. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that his delegation endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Colombia in his statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

57. The new format of the budget was a considerable improvement and should contribute to the further refinement of the preparatory process. However, certain fundamental principles should be maintained. The process should be in accordance with specific intergovernmental mandates and in full conformity with the objectives of the Charter. The proposed programme budget for the biennium fell short of reflecting the priorities set by the General Assembly. It was essential that agreed priorities should not be changed and specific areas not be overemphasized at the expense of others that were of considerable concern to the majority of Member States. Pakistan supported the CPC recommendations regarding the broad priorities approved in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

58. The Secretary-General must be given sufficient resources to carry out the mandates entrusted to him. Real growth of 1 per cent was the minimum required to meet the additional demands on the Organization. At the same time, budgetary discipline should be fully observed and resources utilized in the most economical and efficient manner.

59. The prioritization of programmes and the allocation of resources must be in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly. Clearly, the new demands on the United Nations meant that its capacity in the field of preventive diplomacy, the peaceful settlement of disputes, peace-keeping and peace building needed to be strengthened. The Secretary-General had made a convincing case for increasing the resources allocated to United Nations activities in the political field. Nevertheless, the expansion of peace-keeping and related activities should not be at the expense of the social and economic sectors, where the role of the United Nations was essential to the developing countries. While there was undoubtedly a need for restructuring and reform in the various economic and social sectors, the savings that resulted must be channelled back to the sector in which they had accrued instead of being diverted to cover the Organization's expenses in other areas.

60. The creation of the three new departments in the economic and social field would help to bring about system-wide coordination and policy guidance, enhance research and analysis of important global economic and social issues and expand technical cooperation activities in the developing world. However, coordination between the new departments, and a clear delineation of their responsibilities as well as an effective relationship between them and the various agencies and funds of the system, was essential to achieve the aims in view. The overall

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objective must be to make the United Nations system more relevant to the needs of Member States. In that context, the Secretary-General's proposal to expand the analytical capacity of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis should be favourably considered.

61. His delegation was concerned that the immediate future of the Office for Project Services as a semi-autonomous, efficient and self-financing unit was not guaranteed in the proposed merger with the Department for Development Support and Management Services. The approach whereby the Department would focus on special groups of countries, such as the economies in transition or the least developed countries, was also a matter of concern and would be in disregard of the General Assembly's guidelines.

62. The Committee was still awaiting additional proposals by the Secretary-General on the decentralization of resources and activities from Headquarters to the field, including the regional commissions. Any measures proposed must take into account the criteria set out by the General Assembly in resolution 47/212 B in order to avoid diluting the impact of the United Nations in such crucial fields as natural resources and science and technology.

63. The Secretary-General had said that he intended to complete the current restructuring process by the Organization's fiftieth anniversary. His delegation agreed that the new structures should be given time to work and the staff be allowed to concentrate on the tasks assigned to it before any attempts were made to change them further. The Secretariat must be adequately staffed if the Organization was to cope with the increasing demands placed on it. The lifting of the freeze on recruitment would provide much needed relief for a staff which was already overburdened.

64. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that the difficult task of undertaking a full review of the proposed programme budget had been aggravated by the time constraints under which the Committee was working. He would respond to the general issues raised concerning the budget proposals and highlight some of their key aspects. Specific questions would be answered during consideration of the relevant budget section.

65. Since the revised estimates for 1992-1993 had not been adopted until May 1993, the Secretariat had had less time than usual to prepare the budget proposals, and CPC had not reviewed the programmatic aspects until October, when ACABQ had begun its own review. In future, the Secretariat would do its best to comply with the timetable for submission of the proposed programme budget.

66. The Secretary-General had made every effort to contain the proposals within the budget outline approved by the General Assembly. Because of the unanticipated increase in the workload, he had had to request more resources than envisaged in the outline. However, the outline should not be regarded as a limit on the budget proposals.

(Mr. Takasu)

67. As a result of the redeployment of human and financial resources, it had been possible to propose a real growth rate of only 1 per cent. The Secretariat knew that taxpayers' money must be used as efficiently as possible and had tried to accommodate the extra requirements through rationalization and redeployment. But it had proved impossible to meet the additional workload with the existing numbers of staff, and the Secretary-General had requested the modest net increase of 68 posts - 41 at the Professional and higher levels and 27 at the General Service level. However, the dynamic approach to the formulation of the budget proposals had produced 91 posts at the Professional and higher levels and 87 General Service posts through abolition of existing posts. The Secretary-General believed that the proposed programme budget would provide the basis for consolidating his restructuring efforts and for the Secretariat to meet the extra demands of Member States.

68. The Secretary-General had taken into account the priorities set out in the medium-term plan and relevant General Assembly resolutions, although those priorities, which were for the period 1992-1997, did not necessarily translate into increased resources in every biennium. The long-term nature of economic and social development should not detract from its urgency. The aim of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors had been to remedy the problem of fragmentation and provide better programme delivery. In the next biennium the United Nations was to convene six major conferences to advance the cause of development. The Commission on Sustainable Development and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had been established to deal with the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The follow-up activities would be provided with the necessary resources.

69. Consistent with the priority attached to Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had been strengthened, and in section 8 of the programme budget (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) the Secretariat proposed strengthening the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries in connection with the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. ECA had the largest share of resources under section 20 (Regular programme of technical cooperation), with an increase of $3 million. In section 11A the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had a programme on the least developed countries, most of which were located in Africa.

70. The Secretariat was also mindful of the priority given to drug control. A system-wide action plan had been formulated and the International Drug Control Programme had been established. The Secretary-General proposed that the post of the Programme's Executive Director should become an established post. The Programme was financed mainly from extrabudgetary resources (about $190 million for the biennium).

71. Many of the reforms stemming from UNCTAD VIII had been reflected in the revisions of the medium-term plan and in the proposed programme budget.

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72. A number of delegations had commented on the recosting of the budget. The proposals contained a provision for inflation based on the latest available assumptions regarding cost increases in respect of non-salary-related items and on standard cost parameters. No provision was made for currency fluctuations because of their unpredictable nature. The rates of exchange used for converting expenditures in other currencies into dollars were the ones approved by the General Assembly on the basis of the first programme budget performance report for the previous biennium. The programme budget was recosted on three occasions on the basis of the latest rates of exchange and latest information about inflation and adjustments to standard costs: at the end of the session of the General Assembly; at the end of the first year of the biennium in the context of the first performance report; and in the context of the second performance report. That standard procedure had been confirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 41/213.

73. Under normal circumstances, therefore, the Secretary-General would have submitted a separate report to the Committee and ACABQ on the first proposed recosting in December 1993 and it would have been dealt with separately from the review of the budget proposals. At the current session the Advisory Committee had requested information about the rates of exchange and inflation figures as at the end of November 1993 and had then recommended a reduction of $92 million in the proposed programme budget. Some delegations had suggested that the Secretariat should not come back in December 1994 with a request for additional funds to cover overexpenditure of the appropriation and that it should absorb cost increases as far as possible. In fact, the 1994 performance report would not deal with expenditure but with the changes required as a result of shifts in exchange rates and inflation. The second performance report in December 1995 would deal with expenditure. Since assumptions about currency fluctuations and inflation might change during the implementation of a budget, it would not be fair to introduce a system whereby amounts underspent owing to lower inflation and a stronger dollar were returned to Member States, while overexpenditures caused by those same factors were not approved.

74. With regard to the absorption of cost increases, resolution 41/213 provided that, pending a solution of the issue, estimates arising from the impact of fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation should continue to be treated in accordance with established procedures, but that the Secretary-General should nevertheless try to absorb them without jeopardizing programme delivery and without prejudice to the use of the contingency fund. Having reviewed the Secretary-General's progress report on a reserve fund to cover requirements due to currency fluctuations and inflation and the related ACABQ report, the General Assembly had decided not to change the present system but to keep it under review.

75. By its nature, the United Nations budget was vulnerable to inflation and currency fluctuations. Inflation rates at many duty stations did not necessarily conform to a unified trend, and there was no perfect way of dealing with their unpredictability. Sometimes the fluctuations were so great that any savings which could be made were totally inadequate to meet them. The level of savings required to absorb the additional costs and the inability of the

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Organization to effect them at short notice would entail significant curtailment even of mandated activities or sizeable economy measures. The current system was still the least inconvenient way of dealing with the matter. The Secretariat had tried to make more realistic assumptions by adjusting high inflation rates in some duty stations which might be offset by currency depreciation.

76. One delegation had asked why the biennialization of the base for the Office of Conference Services, the Office of General Services, and the United Nations Office at Geneva showed large increases although the offices remained largely unchanged by the restructuring. Table 2 in the introduction to the draft programme budget setting out the totals for part VIII (Common support services) showed that the net result of combining the appropriations under former sections 32 and 33 with the appropriation under former section 31 and applying the necessary adjustments for biennialization was a reduction of about $13 million. The bulk of the decrease was due to the transfer of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library from the Department of Administration and Management to the Department of Public Information. The combined total of the three amounts was equivalent to the increase of $165 million.

77. The standard vacancy rate for posts at the Professional and higher levels was set at 5 per cent and had been applied across the board in order to fine-tune the estimates. Additional savings, as had been suggested in the Committee, could be factored into the budget by applying specific vacancy rates at some duty stations where the vacancy rates were higher than the norm. However, there could also be increased costs at duty stations where the vacancy rates were lower than 5 per cent. That approach had been taken selectively in the past by the Committee and ACABQ in the expectation that other factors would lead to overall savings in the final performance report which would offset increased requirements at duty stations where the vacancy rates were lower than 5 per cent.

78. Because of the emergency measures taken by the Secretary-General requests for additional staff had been met as far as possible through deployment, and the vacancy rate had been higher than in the previous bienniums. During 1992 the rates had fluctuated from 5.9 to 3.3 per cent for posts at the Professional and higher levels and from 5.6 to 2.3 per cent for General Service posts. In September 1993 the rates had been 7.6 and 1.6 per cent respectively. Those were global averages: the Professional vacancy rate ranged from 3.2 per cent in New York to over 15 per cent at some other duty stations. For 1994-1995 the Secretary-General hoped to end the recruitment freeze once his budget proposals had been approved. Increasing the budgeted turnover rate for Professional posts might prompt requests for additional resources in the first performance report. The movement of vacancy rates would therefore have to be monitored before the freeze was ended.

79. The Secretariat had tried to increase the transparency of the budget process by including in the initial proposals for each biennium as much as possible of the foreseeable requirements for the next biennium. Thus, in 1992

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the Secretary-General had proposed the inclusion of $28 million in the 1994-1995 budget outline for future preventive diplomacy and peacemaking missions. However, the General Assembly had not approved that provision. As a result, appropriations to meet additional requirements would have to be requested at the present session, and similar requirements might arise during 1994-1995.

80. Additional requirements might also arise from decisions of the General Assembly and the revised estimates submitted by the Secretary-General at the current session and during 1994-1995. Where possible, additional activities would be accommodated by reprogramming and redeployment. Any additional resources which were approved would be charged against the contingency fund for each biennium. For 1994-1995 the General Assembly had established the contingency fund at 0.75 per cent of the budget outline, i.e. $20 million. Activities of an extraordinary nature would be dealt with outside the contingency fund.

81. In resolution 46/187 the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the biennium 1992-1993 to meet unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. Certain commitments did not require the prior concurrence of ACABQ but they were always reported to ACABQ and the General Assembly. It should be noted that the commitment authority of $3 million a year in respect of the maintenance of peace and security had proved insufficient to meet the sharp increase in the number of good offices and other missions. In the context of the present proposals the Committee would again have to approve a resolution on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. The Secretariat would consult it concerning the levels of commitment authority.

82. Turning to questions of human resources, he said that, with regard to the classification of posts according to the Master standard of the International Civil Service Commission, when the classification findings of the Advisory Board for Budgeting and Finance and the Office of Human Resources Management were in disagreement, changes were required in the content of posts or conversely in the programme budget proposals.

83. There was no established ratio of Professional to General Service posts. For example, the Office of General Services had more General Service staff than other departments because of the nature of its work. Some delegations had argued that the Secretary-General was asking for too many General Service posts. In fact he was requesting only 27 net additional posts: 25 in the United Nations Office at Vienna, which was taking over a number of functions previously performed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and 10 posts in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific required following the completion of the new conference facilities at Bangkok. The increasing use of computer technology had certainly yielded productivity gains in the Secretariat, but it was not easy to quantify those gains in terms of staff savings. In any event, it would be impossible to contain staffing levels without technological innovations.

84. There was no double budgeting of staff funded from the regular budget who were seconded to peace-keeping missions. For the duration of such secondment

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the staff member's salary and related costs were charged against the mission budget. However, temporary replacements could be hired and charged against the regular budget post in question.

85. Posts used for backstopping of peace-keeping operations could be financed from the regular budget, the peace-keeping support account, voluntary contributions, or a combination thereof. However, in view of the uncertainty of voluntary contributions they were usually charged to the regular budget and the support account. The posts financed from the regular budget were regarded as "core posts" since they provided continuity in the implementation of the peace-keeping programme. The proliferation of peace-keeping operations had led to an increase in the number of such posts. The determination of how many should be included in the regular budget was a largely pragmatic exercise which took into account the limit to the possible growth in the regular budget and its appropriate share of such backstopping expenses.

86. With regard to the budget format, the current grouping into parts and sections reflected the Secretariat's perception of a logical presentation. Sections 12A and 12B (United Nations Environment Programme and Habitat) were regarded as separate sections, and any transfer of resources between them would require the Advisory Committee's consent. The same applied to sections 11A and 11B and to sections 22A and 22B. The Advisory Committee had welcomed the new format and agreed that in future bienniums staff costs should be divided into two categories: costs related to posts and costs related to such items as temporary assistance.

87. In its report on the prototype of a new budget presentation (A/C.5/47/3), the Secretariat had indicated its intention to provide more comprehensive information on the extrabudgetary resources which it estimated would be available to supplement regular resources. Nevertheless, a number of practical difficulties remained. Extrabudgetary activities, for example, could not be programmed with the same precision as regular budget proposals, since they depended on the availability of voluntary contributions which could be difficult to project two or three years ahead. Also, the needs of recipients of technical assistance and the exact composition of estimated extrabudgetary expenditures could also be difficult to project. The Secretariat still intended, however, to improve the presentation of extrabudgetary resources in future programme budget proposals, including staff resources provided by Member States.

88. On the question of standards of staff travel, the Secretariat was mindful of the need to administer travel resources with due regard to economy. Standards of travel for staff had been established over the years after careful study and review. Consideration of the most recent reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the subject had been deferred by the General Assembly to a later date.

89. Responding to the request that, beginning in 1994, quarterly expenditure reports should be submitted to cover all types of expenditures from all sources of funds, he noted that financial regulation 111.4 stated that financial statements should be prepared annually, and at such other intervals as might be

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prescribed by the Controller. Unaudited interim financial statements were in fact prepared every six months and were made available to ACABQ and the Board of Auditors. The most recent of those statements, for the 18-month period ending 30 June 1993, could be made available to interested delegations upon request. Owing to staffing and other constraints, the Secretariat proposed to continue its biannual reporting.

90. The ultimate goal of the restructuring exercise was to make the Organization more efficient and effective, and to eliminate duplication, redundancy and waste. As a result of the restructuring carried out earlier in the year, three new economic and social departments had been created. The division of labour among them had been clearly explained to the General Assembly in earlier reports of the Secretary-General. Programmatic analyses of those changes would be submitted to the General Assembly in 1994. In an era when issues were increasingly interrelated, aspects of a number of questions in the economic and social sectors fell within the purview of more than one of the three new departments. The Secretary-General was acutely aware of the possibilities of duplication and overlap and attached high priority to the avoidance of such problems. As a result, monthly coordination meetings took place between the heads of the three departments, in addition to less formal arrangements at the working level. Moreover, the Secretary-General had recently decided that his Office would convene weekly meetings between the heads of the three departments.

91. Many questions had been asked about the activities of the former Office of the Director-General for International Economic Cooperation. Those activities, which included policy coordination, inter-agency coordination, and the New Agenda for Africa, had now been incorporated into the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

92. Turning to the organizational arrangements for transnational corporations and science and technology, he noted that the revised estimates on the restructuring adopted by the General Assembly had proposed the transfer of many of the activities undertaken by the former Centre for Science and Technology for Development and the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations in order to enhance the work of the United Nations on improved access by the developing countries to technology and on improved contributions by transnational corporations to development. A Division for Transnational Corporations, Technology and Investment had accordingly been established within UNCTAD. Moreover, the other activities of UNCTAD relating to foreign direct investment, privatization, entrepreneurship and competitiveness were to be redeployed to that Division. Those arrangements would eliminate duplication and create linkages that would enhance the quality of programme delivery.

93. On the subject of the International Trade Centre, he recalled that the General Assembly had retained a post in the budget at the assistant secretary-general level for the Executive Director of the Centre and had requested the Secretary-General to pursue consultations with the Director-General of GATT to ensure that the post would be promptly filled. The Secretary-General was undertaking a further review of the Centre's programme and administrative

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practices, the results of which would provide a solid new basis for finalizing the consultations with GATT and reaching an early decision.

94. With regard to Habitat, the Secretary-General had taken full account of the views expressed by the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies. He had also reviewed the previous year's experience of keeping UNEP and Habitat under a common direction. Accordingly, he now proposed to establish a regular budget post of Assistant Secretary-General in order to provide a separate senior management for Habitat, which would thus maintain its own separate identity. At the same time, new arrangements to put UNEP and Habitat under common executive direction would make it possible to derive maximum programmatic and administrative advantage. The appointment of the head of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements would take place as soon as the General Assembly approved the proposal for a post at the assistant secretary-general level.

95. On the question of decentralization, the Secretary-General had reported in the proposed programme budget on the initial outcome of efforts to redeploy more resources from the regular programme for technical cooperation to the regional commissions. Unfortunately, in the area of natural resources and energy activities, the Secretariat had found it impossible to complete the inter-Secretariat review which involved Headquarters departments, as well as UNCTAD, UNEP and the regional commissions. It was therefore not in a position to submit a report to the General Assembly at its current session. As soon as it completed that review, it would report to the General Assembly, providing detailed programmatic justification.

96. Turning to the transfer of the Field Operations Division (FOD), he noted that FOD provided administrative support to peace-keeping operations, good offices missions and other special missions. That support encompassed the areas of logistics, communications, field personnel administration, travel, finance, budget, and electronic data processing services. The majority of the Division's activities were financed from the peace-keeping support account and it was therefore considered appropriate to integrate FOD into the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, since the Division played a key role at all stages of the conception, planning and deployment of new missions and handled residual functions in respect of completed missions.

97. As for the incorporation of the Office for Project Services (OPS) into the Department for Development Support and Management Services, major progress had been made and institutional and administrative arrangements completed, with full account having been taken of the concerns and views expressed by the Governing Council of UNDP, the General Assembly and ACABQ. The Secretariat wished to assure Member States and staff concerned that OPS would continue to enjoy its semi-autonomous, self-financing and efficient status within the United Nations. The management board of OPS felt strongly that the prolongation of the actual transfer would lead to an additional period of uncertainty which would have devastating effects both on the resources available to OPS from Member States and on the morale of staff concerned. The Secretariat had a duty to put an end to that uncertainty and it therefore appealed for the understanding and support of members of the Fifth Committee.

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98. On the question of United Nations centres, the Secretary-General was keenly aware of the importance of United Nations activities at Nairobi and Vienna. He proposed to keep under review the functioning and requirements of those offices in the context of his overall review of the United Nations global network.

99. Turning to the recommendations of ACABQ, he commended the Advisory Committee on its extraordinary efforts to complete and make available its report in such a short time. The report contained many valuable observations and recommendations as well as a number of requests for the Secretariat to submit additional reports for consideration by ACABQ at its resumed session in February 1994. Much as the Secretariat would like to comply with the request of ACABQ, realistically speaking, it might not be in a position to produce all of the reports requested within that time-frame.

100. The Secretary-General's proposed programme budget represented the minimum level of resources required to fulfil the expectations of Member States. Significant curtailment of the requirements would hamper the Secretariat's ability to discharge those responsibilities. He therefore wished to appeal for the understanding and support of members of the Fifth Committee with regard to the estimates in a number of areas, including the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in which ACABQ had recommended reductions.

101. If the Secretary-General's request for a net staffing increase of 68 additional posts was not approved, it would cause great difficulties for the Secretariat and would adversely affect the proper functioning of the Organization. The Secretariat was determined to eliminate existing staffing anomalies and to end as soon as possible the current recruitment freeze. It was also making every effort to place within the total staffing table all supernumerary staff performing indispensable tasks for whom there were no approved posts. Moreover, once the budget was approved, the Secretariat was determined to improve its financial and personnel management in order to ensure full accountability.

102. With regard to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), the major expansion in the role and activities of the organization had resulted in a corresponding increase in the demands placed on the Secretary-General. No duplication of functions, however, existed between EOSG and other offices. It was the Secretary-General's clear policy that substantive responsibility for activities in political affairs and peace-keeping should lie with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, respectively. EOSG provided direct support to the Secretary-General in relation to those activities which required his personal involvement. He wished to emphasize that all of the posts requested for the biennium 1994-1995 had been redeployed to EOSG during the biennium 1992-1993, with the exception of three Professional and two General Service posts. Consequently, the budget submission requested only five new posts. The recommendation of ACABQ in that regard would seriously hamper the smooth operation of EOSG.

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103. As to the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization's founding, the Secretary-General believed that that event constituted a major milestone to be marked not only by a celebration but also by a programme of serious reflection, education and communication. Its observance afforded a historic opportunity to inform and mobilize public opinion, enlarge the global constituency of the Organization and launch a renewed and reinforced United Nations into the twenty-first century. It was a celebration not for the Secretariat but rather for the international community as a whole. The decision to establish a small unit to function for a limited duration as the focal point for the coordination of global fiftieth anniversary activities had taken into account the views expressed by the Preparatory Committee established by the General Assembly. It would not be realistic, however, to expect the Secretariat to undertake without adequate resources a task which affected every Member State and every region. He recalled, in that context, that regular budget funds had been authorized for the commemoration of the Organization's twenty-fifth anniversary. The recommendation of ACABQ in that connection would thus seriously hamper the Secretariat's activities for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary.

104. Concern had been expressed that the United Nations interim offices would be expected to perform activities without legislative mandates. Other concerns related to the possible use of the interim offices for human rights monitoring and the extension of such activities to other United Nations field offices. When undertaking human rights, preventive diplomacy, or peace-keeping activities in individual countries in response to mandates by the General Assembly or the Security Council, the Secretary-General proposed to consult with the Government concerned in order to determine, with its consent, how such mandates could best be implemented. There was no intention that such activities should form part of the functions of the interim offices, except where specific mandates existed.

105. The experience to date with the interim offices had been positive. The Secretariat believed that the functions being carried out by those offices were consistent with legislative mandates, especially those calling for an integrated, unified, cost-effective and innovative approach to development cooperation and presence in new recipient countries, the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, and the development of a more integrated, multidisciplinary United Nations presence in the field. The Secretariat hoped that the Fifth Committee would revert to that issue at a later stage.

106. As to the Office of Conference Services, the recommendation of ACABQ to reinstate 19 positions in that Office without a corresponding increase of 19 posts in the total staffing table would be impossible to implement and would aggravate and extend the severity and duration of the current anomalies in the staffing situation.

107. With regard to the reclassification of posts, ACABQ had not recommended for approval at the current stage any of the 39 reclassifications of posts at the Professional and higher levels proposed by the Secretary-General. Many of those requests had been reviewed by the Classification Unit. The Secretariat was of the view that the postponement of approval was unfortunate and would further

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aggravate anomalies in the staffing situation and adversely affect the motivation and morale of staff.

108. With regard to the recently established 24-hour Situation Room, he noted that the main beneficiaries would be peace-keeping operations overseas and other programmes under the regular budget. The Secretariat therefore urged the Committee to endorse its proposal that the Situation Room should be funded jointly from the peace-keeping support account and from regular budget resources.

109. At a time when every effort was being made to enhance efficiency and effectiveness and to promote economy, adequate resources for technological innovations must be seen as a sound investment. The proposed investment in a United Nations satellite network was expected to result in significant and tangible savings as well as enhanced security of operations for the Organization in the immediate future. The one-time capital cost and operational requirements for the system would be more than justified in view of the Organization's current expenditures on commercial telecommunications. It would also provide United Nations staff away from Headquarters with assurances of access to Headquarters.

110. For their part, the economic and social departments had tried to focus their resources on essential activities. Despite those efforts, certain important requests for the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA) and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) had not been approved by ACABQ. For its part, the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) had been allocated only a maintenance budget at the current stage. It should be noted that the responsibilities of DESIPA, in particular, were derived from resolutions of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, which had called for the continuation of existing activities as well as a number of new ones. The six posts recommended for suppression by ACABQ had been obtained through redeployment from the vacancy pool and included in the Secretary-General's revised estimates for 1992-1993, which had been approved by the General Assembly. While the Secretariat agreed that an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of DESIPA was indeed required, any interruption of the work currently being undertaken in response to General Assembly resolutions 46/199, 47/171 and 47/187 would be most unfortunate.

111. The Advisory Committee's proposed reduction of the resources for the general temporary assistance requested for DESIPA, for example, would seriously impair the Secretariat's ability to carry out its responsibilities just prior to and immediately after the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

112. On the subject of training, the Secretary-General strongly believed that, through the enhanced expertise provided by training, the Organization would benefit from improved performance by its staff. The Secretariat appreciated the support expressed by delegations for the training programme of the United

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Nations and welcomed the recommendation of ACABQ that the Secretary-General's request in that regard should be approved.

113. The Secretary-General attached great importance to accountability and good management. The weaknesses of the current systems of accountability, monitoring and evaluation were well known and would be addressed. Internal control and oversight were essential to ensuring efficient management and the detection of waste and abuse. In that connection, the establishment of the Office for Inspections and Investigations represented the implementation of the Secretary-General's commitment to ensure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and accountability.

114. He wished to conclude by thanking, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the members of the Fifth Committee for their fortitude and commitment in undertaking the full review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 in order to permit its approval by the General Assembly before the end of the year. With the approval of the budget, the Organization could enter the forthcoming biennium on a sound financial basis. He wished to note, however, that in addition to an approved budget, a sound financial base required the prompt, full and unconditional payment of assessed contributions.

115. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) thanked the Controller for his comprehensive answers to the questions raised concerning the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. She wished to recall, however, that her delegation had requested from the Secretariat information concerning the implementation of activities for the benefit of countries in transition. She looked forward to a response from the Secretariat at a later meeting.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

116. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the new programme of work which had just been distributed. In order to rationalize the Committee's work, the Bureau proposed to group the various sections of the programme budget proposals into five clusters, each of which would require a single introductory statement by the Secretariat. Such an approach would save time and thereby permit the Committee to concentrate on negotiations in informal consultations. Where there was agreement, decisions would be adopted in first reading. Where there were divergent views, or where time did not permit, he hoped that the items concerned could be resolved in informal consultations.

117. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation accepted the Chairman's proposal on the understanding that the Committee would not take decisions on matters on which there were differences of views concerning programmatic content or allocation of resources, particularly if the proposals concerned lacked legislative authority.

118. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to proceed in accordance with the proposed programme of work.

119. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
32nd meeting
held on
Thursday, 9 December 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/48/6, A/48/7, A/48/16 (Parts I and II), A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1, and A/C.5/48/26)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda) said that his delegation agreed with the views expressed in the general debate on the budget by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. Owing to the late issuance of the Advisory Committee's first report, the Fifth Committee would not adequately benefit from that Committee's expert views in its consideration of the budget proposals. Decisive measures must be taken to address the late issuance of documents.

3. The presentation of the programme budget was much improved, although more could be done to simplify the format and improve the precision of narratives, in which regard he supported the views of the Advisory Committee and those of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

4. While his delegation agreed that a number of factors justified the 1 per cent real growth in the budget, the fact that a certain category of programmes of interest to developing countries had not benefited from the growth gave cause for concern. The attempt by some to present zero growth as if it were a rule endorsed by the General Assembly was inappropriate and misleading. Further, the outline, as an instrument of budgeting, was only an indicative forecast and not a limit to be resolutely defended. The ultimate focus, in agreeing on the budget, should be the full implementation of mandated programmes.

5. He endorsed the view of the Secretary-General that the promotion of economic and social progress was essential to democracy and peace, an interrelationship which should be reflected in the balance of the budget for the biennium 1994-1995. In reality the budget proposals contained generous increases for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping, political affairs, and human rights and humanitarian affairs. Nevertheless, a fair balance could still be reached, and the priorities of the medium-term plan, including those relating to development, respected. Regarding the implementation of mandates relating to programmes on science and technology for development and transnational corporations, further clarification was required of the extent to which General Assembly resolution 47/212 B had been complied with.

6. The overall level of resources proposed for section 15 was not sufficient in view of the increased activities to be carried out by the Economic Commission for Africa. Further, the distribution of resources within section 15 was not satisfactory.

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7. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to review the placement of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) under common executive direction and would appreciate clarification of the reporting procedures envisaged under any new arrangement. In that connection, a majority of Member States favoured maintaining the post of Executive Director of Habitat at the under-secretary-general level. Further, he welcomed the assurance that steps were being taken to appoint a new Executive Director of the International Trade Centre.

8. The General Assembly, in its resolution 47/212 B, had welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to consider the relocation of activities in order to sharpen the substantive focus of United Nations programmes and centres, and had requested him to submit proposals in the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995 to reflect the status of the United Nations Centre in Nairobi. His delegation would welcome an explanation concerning the related budget proposals.

9. He welcomed the realization that there was now a need for consolidation to enable the Organization to concentrate on the purposes for which it had been created rather than on restructuring. Lastly, his delegation was committed to working towards the adoption by consensus of a budget for the biennium 1994-1995 before the end of the regular session.

10. Mr. KHENE (Algeria) said that his delegation supported the statement by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

11. The late commencement of the budget item was regrettable. In particular, the late issuance of the ACABQ report had added to the Fifth Committee's difficulties in considering the proposed programme budget, the adoption of which in accordance with established budgetary procedure was essential for the sound management of the Organization.

12. Consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 came at a time of profound change and increased importance for the United Nations. The Organization must respond in a balanced manner to peace and security, economic and social development and human rights concerns. It was obvious that additional resources were needed to discharge mandates in those areas. The budget, above all, represented the vehicle whereby the Secretariat translated into practice the wishes of Member States.

13. The new budget format was intended to ensure greater transparency, optimum utilization of resources and greater flexibility. Further refinement was necessary, particularly regarding extrabudgetary resources and the link between the two categories of funding. His delegation reaffirmed its preference for the funding of certain programmes, particularly development-related, from extrabudgetary resources.

14. Although the proposed programme budget was larger than the revised appropriations for the previous biennium, it was small in relation to the increased level of activities. The 1 per cent real growth was fully justified. Programmes should not be circumscribed by an arbitrary limit on resource growth.

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(Mr. Khene, Algeria)

The General Assembly had never endorsed the concept of zero growth, which was founded in dogmatism rather than technical considerations.

15. While the budget proposals reflected positive growth for some important activities, his delegation noted with concern that the economic and development sector would experience negative growth. The activities and resources included under the proposed programme budget must reflect the priorities incorporated by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan, which provided a balanced political framework for the formulation of the budget.

16. The focus on political and peace-keeping issues should not relegate development questions to a lower priority. In reality, however, the development-related activities included in the medium-term plan had not received proper attention. It was essential to balance the interests of all Member States in the programme budget. In particular, the needs of Africa must be properly addressed. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should be included under a separate section, particularly since section 15 did not detail projects for Africa. Additional resources should be provided for ECA.

17. Sections 8, 9 and 10 corresponded to the three new departments established in the economic, social and environmental areas in an integrated approach to the various aspects of development. Restructuring must, however, help to improve programme execution in those sectors and not be an end in itself. It was important for there not to be any duplication in the work of the three departments, which must reflect the mandates established by intergovernmental organs. In particular, the insistence that the Department for Development Support and Management Services should focus on transition economies and least developed countries was not justified.

First reading

Part I. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

Part II. Political affairs

Part III. International justice and law

18. The CHAIRMAN said that the total estimates proposed by the Secretary-General amounted to US$ 45,824,200 for part I, US$ 165,757,200 for part II and US$ 53,725,600 for part III. The Advisory Committee had recommended appropriations totalling US$ 36,605,100 for part I, US$ 154,541,600 for part II and US$ 50,844,500 for part III.

19. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), referring to the Advisory Committee recommendation that only 6 new posts should be approved for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, said that the request for 15 new posts would not result in any duplication, but had been made as a consequence of the expansion in the activities of the United Nations and the increasing demands placed on the Secretary-General and his Executive Office. Of the 15 "new" posts, 10 had

(Mr. Takasu)

already been provided through redeployment. Accordingly, acceptance of the Advisory Committee's recommendation would mean that the Executive Office would have fewer staff than it already had, which would severely hamper its functioning.

20. Contrary to the view of the Advisory Committee, a specific mandate for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy had been provided by the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary. In that regard, ACABQ had recommended certain deletions, and had further recommended that the relevant resources should be included under section 24 (DPI). In fact, given the staffing needed for the many activities performed by the Office of the Special Adviser, which should be maintained as a specific focal point, and the importance of the fiftieth anniversary, acceptance of the ACABQ recommendation would mean that staffing would be overly reduced and activities compromised.

21. With respect to coordination between the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the latter's Chairman served as a focal point in connection with activities of common interest to CSCE and the United Nations. Regarding the matter of United Nations integrated offices, which was still under consideration by the Second Committee, the Secretary-General had temporarily redeployed seven posts, so that if resources were not included in the budget provisions the Secretariat would once again have fewer resources available than it was currently using.

22. Regarding the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction of $300,000 for consultants and experts under section 3 B, the Committee should note that the Secretary-General was seeking to provide not only for currently mandated disarmament activities but also for possible new mandates, given which a request for $1.4 million had been made. In that regard the Secretary-General had not requested an additional appropriation in connection with a series of First Committee resolutions relating to disarmament issues, on the assumption that the request of $1.4 million would be approved. If the Advisory Committee recommendation for a reduction of $300,000 was accepted, the implementation of disarmament activities might well be adversely affected.

23. As a result of the increase in Security Council activities, in particular an increase in the workload of the sanctions committees, the Secretary-General had requested the establishment of an additional six General Service posts. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of only four of those posts, but since the workload of the Council and its Committees had increased further since the original request, the Secretary-General would, in fact, need to request an additional four posts in the form of revised estimates.

24. In connection with section 3C, the Committee would note that Resident Coordinators had often been called upon to assist in electoral monitoring processes and to report thereon to the Secretary-General. In future it was intended to assign a political affairs officer to assist Resident Coordinators in that function. Regarding the D-1 and D-2 posts referred to in paragraphs II.22 and II.23 of the ACABQ report, the number of peace-keeping and

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(Mr. Takasu)

preventive diplomacy missions, involving many tasks of a sensitive nature which could be performed only by senior officials, had increased. The D-2 post in question had been provided for some time through redeployment. Also in section 3C, the Committee would note that the work of the Electoral Assistance Unit had increased tremendously, to such an extent that each officer was now dealing with 12 countries. Lastly, under section 4, the Committee should note that the situation room not only played a useful role with regard to peace-keeping operations but also had a vital security function for staff on mission. That was why the Secretary-General had requested that half of the funding should be provided under the regular budget.

25. Mr. STÖCKL (Rapporteur of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) invited members to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC relating to sections 1 to 7 of the proposed programme budget, contained in paragraphs 44 to 83 of its report A/48/16 (Part II). With respect to section 1, he drew attention to paragraph 49 of the report, which was relevant to the debate on the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy as well as the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. As to section 2, the Committee had been unable to make a recommendation on the question of United Nations integrated offices which, as indicated in paragraph 52, had been taken up by the Second Committee. CPC recommended that the General Assembly should approve the programme narrative of section 3 of the budget, as explained in paragraphs 68 to 73 of its report. Likewise, the Committee recommended approval of section 4, stressing the importance it attached to the safety of United Nations personnel involved in the peace-keeping operations as well as section 7 concerning appropriations for legal activities.

26. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Union, wished to focus on the budget proposals relating to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. In the light of the Advisory Committee's first report, he stressed that the examination of the budget should not merely consist in reacting to the Secretary-General's proposals, but should be an opportunity for a critical and in-depth review of the different sections of the budget so as to identify possible ways of reallocating resources. Such an exercise was indispensable if the Organization was to rise to the new challenges and meet the real needs of the international community.

27. He commended the Secretary-General for responding to the increasing number and scale of United Nations peace-keeping operations by strengthening the relevant department, whose activities would, it was to be hoped, become more efficient and streamlined in the process. However, as with other sections of the proposed programme budget, the importance of such activities to the United Nations seemed to have been underestimated. For instance, he regretted the fact that no recommendation based on technical considerations had been made on the criteria used for distinguishing between substantive and support activities. He did not accept the argument that all United Nations peace-keeping activities should be financed from extrabudgetary resources. They should be partially funded by the regular budget so as to demonstrate the importance Member States attached to such high-profile activities. He hoped that the Fifth Committee

(Mr. Maddens, Belgium)

would have an opportunity to take a close look at the use of the support account in the near future and was anxious to hear explanations by the Secretariat and the opinions of the Advisory Committee in that connection. He suggested that the Secretary-General should submit a report to the General Assembly on the establishment and operations of the situation room, which was a vital importance to the Organization. From the operational and political standpoint, the United Nations must have a communication infrastructure that allowed officers in the field to remain in contact with their command. He hoped that the Committee could agree on a package of budget proposals which would help the Secretary-General to run peace-keeping operations in the best possible conditions.

28. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that his main concern was the recosting employed in the budget. Before making any accurate recosting, consideration of the final performance report for 1992-1993 would be necessary. However, according to his own preliminary calculations, based on the 1992 interim financial statements made available by the Secretariat, the total actual expenditure for 1992-1993 should not exceed $2,378,000,000 - $89 million less than the May 1993 revised estimate of $2,467,000,000. Those calculations reflected higher actual staff vacancy and inflation rates than had been budgeted for; moreover, the estimate of total expenditure for the biennium was still rather high because it did not take account of the appreciation of the United States dollar during 1993. It was unclear whether the actual vacancy rates reflected the detachment of approximately 1,200 Secretariat staff for peace-keeping missions.

29. For the purposes of its discussion on the budget, the Committee would require some of the additional information made available to ACABQ by the Secretariat, in particular the nominal salary figures per post used in the preparation of the budget, as well as information on how such figures were reached and the instructions issued by the Secretariat to programme managers on preparation procedures. While welcoming the efforts of ACABQ to reduce the recosting figures for 1994-1995, he observed that the inflation figures for New York and Geneva used in the ACABQ report remained significantly overstated. Moreover, in the recosting, no allowance had been made for exchange rate variation during the biennium. It was worth while noting that in 1993 the appreciation of the United States dollar had almost entirely offset inflation in the major duty stations. None the less, he agreed that projections which could not be fully substantiated should not be the basis for determining the level of the budget and therefore proposed that recostings should be dealt with retroactively taking into account the performance reports for 1994-1995.

30. He endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee to reduce the estimates for travel, furniture and equipment, but failed to understand the exceptional treatment accorded to the regional commissions, where comparable reductions should also be made.

31. As to the failure to reduce the total number of General Service staff employed in the Organization, despite significant expenditure on modern technology, he did not support the ACABQ recommendation that the freeze on recruitment, particularly of General Service staff, should be lifted. He also

(Mr. Francis, Australia)

expressed concern at the many exceptions to the freeze made by the Secretariat since its introduction. Before lifting the freeze, steps should be taken to ensure proper evaluation of the need for and classification of posts as well as other aspects of recruitment procedure. He considered that the high ratio of General Service to Professional staff applied throughout the Organization, which had not been made clear by the Advisory Committee in its report.

32. He fully endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 63 of the report that consideration of the reclassification of 42 posts should be deferred until adequate justification for their reclassification was provided. Although he appreciated the efforts to increase the budgeted vacancy rate for Professional staff, he considered that the Advisory Committee could have gone further, and that the budgeted rates should reflect actual vacancy rates more accurately. He also agreed that the delayed recruitment reductions should reflect actual delays. He suggested they should be 50 per cent for Professional posts and 35 per cent for General Service posts, bearing in mind that some new posts simply involved the transfer of staff from temporary or extrabudgetary posts to established posts.

33. He concurred with the view of the Advisory Committee that consultants should be contracted only for short periods to provide technical expertise not available in the Secretariat, but suggested, since the current appropriation in the budget was too high, that reductions in consultancy costs should be more broadly applied throughout the Organization. The contracts of staff members whose skills or performance could not be brought to the desirable level through retraining should be terminated, but he hoped that such persons would not subsequently be employed as consultants to the United Nations.

34. Since the Advisory Committee could not review its own budget, the Fifth Committee should pay special attention to it, evaluating carefully its work programme for the biennium as well as allowances for travel away from Headquarters. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand reserved their position on the final level of funding provided for the Advisory Committee pending examination of its work programme. The current review of the United Nations oversight bodies would require careful consideration of the funding provided for the Board of Auditors. He supported the downgrading of the post of Executive Secretary from D-1 to P-5 on the understanding that a proper evaluation of the responsibilities entailed in the post had been conducted. Likewise, he agreed in principle to the creation of new posts in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General but wondered whether it might not be more appropriate to establish a small group of senior deputy secretaries-general to assist the Secretary-General in his work, with the main activities of the Organization being regrouped accordingly. The proposal for a Special Adviser for Public Policy in charge of activities related to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was in line with General Assembly decision 47/417, and the level of funding proposed in the budget for secretariat support seemed appropriate.

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(Mr. Francis, Australia)

35. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee to delete the posts and consultancy funds for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking and the reasons given for it illustrated that Committee's inconsistent approach to the budget. He stressed the need to provide such resources, in order to comply with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/120. The Secretary-General's response was barely adequate, and it was to be hoped that the Secretariat did have the capacity, within overall resources, to respond adequately to the needs of Member States.

36. As to the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, contrary to the ACABQ recommendations, he supported the proposal for an established post, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/117 F. Moreover, he would welcome clarifications from the Secretariat as to why the incumbent was stationed in New York. A further example of the Advisory Committee's inconsistent approach was the sizeable reductions proposed in consultancy and expert costs for the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Additional information on the current methods for preparing the Disarmament Yearbook and estimates for expert costs would also be welcome, but, in the meantime, the amounts budgeted by the Secretariat should be approved.

37. In view of the Secretary-General's proposal that the Department of Political Affairs should be headed by one Under-Secretary-General, he suggested that the proposals in the budget for staff increases in the offices of the two Under-Secretaries-General should be reviewed and that the Fifth Committee should be informed of the results. The reason for and scale of the increase in consultants and experts fees for the Department of Political Affairs was not well explained in the budget documents, and clarification of that matter would be welcome. In the meantime, however, the amount proposed in the budget should be retained. He supported the proposal for the transfer of the Office of the United Nations Coordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon to the Department of Political Affairs. Furthermore, the arguments given by the Advisory Committee against the additional P-5 post in the Electoral Assistance Unit were not convincing and, subject to additional justification in the form of workload statistics, he was in favour of the new post being retained in the budget.

38. Regarding proposals relating to the situation room, he endorsed the Belgian representative's comments on the Support Account for Peace-keeping Operations. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand wished to reserve their position on the additional 10 posts proposed for the situation room pending a report on the Support Account, but stressed the importance of adequate staffing and management for the situation room on a 24-hour basis. In conclusion, he welcomed the additional resources provided in the budget to handle the increased workload of the International Court of Justice. However, he wondered whether two additional translation posts proposed would be sufficient to meet the increasing demand.

39. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) questioned the suitability of the procedure currently being followed for examining the budget. The work of the Fifth Committee would have been greatly facilitated if the rationale behind the budget proposals had first been explained and then commented on subsequently by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. As to Part I of the proposed programme budget, if she had understood the comments made by the Controller correctly, the proposed estimate of $3,649,000 for section 2 could be deleted, since the matter of the United Nations integrated offices had been referred to the Second Committee. Furthermore, as the Controller and the Chairman of the Advisory Committed had indicated, some of the posts proposed under section 1 had already been established and were the results of earlier transfers. She would welcome further information on the nature of those transfers and whether the correct procedures had been applied in the case of transfers between different sections.

40. The estimates for the Advisory Committee were sufficient and her delegation had not altered its position on the importance of the role of that committee with regard to evaluating the budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. As to the Board of Auditors, she endorsed the request by the Advisory Committee for further justification for the need for the reclassification requested. She also endorsed the recommendation made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in paragraph 48 of its report for the strengthening of the joint CPC/Fifth Committee secretariat unit and would welcome further information from the Secretariat on specific proposals made to meet that concern.

41. Recognizing the important role of the Secretary-General and the wide range of tasks he performed, she failed to understand why in the reports special emphasis had been laid on some tasks rather than others. For instance, little mention had been made of the Secretary-General's contribution to social and economic development and her delegation would be taking up the matter when discussing the relevant draft resolutions. Likewise, she stressed the importance of coordination between the Secretary-General and other principal organs of the United Nations and the need for proper coordination among them in decision-making processes.

42. She questioned the use of references and quotations in general in the budget documentation available and in particular in section 3, relating to political affairs. She objected to the frequent references made to documents issued by the Secretariat and to statements made by the President of the Security Council as the legislative mandate for certain proposals. Furthermore, she did not consider the selective references made to resolutions appropriate. A case in point was paragraph 3.19 of the proposed programme budget, in which mention might also have been made of General Assembly resolution 46/130. Referring to the last sentence of paragraph 3.20, she sought clarification regarding the source of the proposal for extra funding, which to her understanding was not a resolution approved by the General Assembly, but merely a mandate given that very year by the Third Committee. She warned against the tendency to include specific proposals in the budget with a view to securing the subsequent approval of the intergovernmental bodies concerned.

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(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

43. Regarding section 3A, her delegation thought that the provision for official travel was too generous. With respect to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, according to paragraph 3A.13, it had two subcommittees and a working group. However, she was under the impression that the General Assembly had decided in 1991 that the Special Committee should have only one subcommittee. Perhaps the Secretariat could clarify that matter. In addition, she wondered why, among the mandates of the Committee listed in paragraph 3A.14, there was no reference to activities in connection with the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

44. Section 3B placed undue emphasis on the role of the Department of Political Affairs in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking to the detriment of other mandates. Her delegation was not convinced of the need to add posts for preventive diplomacy and would like information on the expected workload for the proposed posts. It also failed to understand the reason for the emphasis on the identification of potential crises. She noted that in paragraph 3B.42, under disarmament subprogramme 4, the Secretary-General proposed to entrust preventive diplomacy functions to the regional disarmament centres.

45. Mr. SHARMA (Nepal) welcomed the Secretary-General's request to convert the P-5 post of the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to established status. The decision to authorize that post on a temporary basis had been an anomaly in view of the established status conferred at the same time to the posts of director of the centres for the other regions. As representative of the host country of the centre for Asia and the Pacific, he was curious to know what difficulties had led to the stationing of the Director at New York instead of at Kathmandu. The proposed programme budget referred to the Secretary-General's decision to extend the mandates of the regional centres to include preventive diplomacy functions. That topic had been extensively debated in the First Committee during the session, and there was general agreement that the regional centres had a role in promoting regional confidence and security. Because preventive diplomacy was an evolving concept, the centre for Asia and the Pacific was concentrating its efforts on bringing together specialists in strategic studies and government officials to discuss confidence-building measures. A meeting on international arms transfers was scheduled to take place in Kathmandu in January 1994.

46. He wished to assure the Committee that his Government agreed that the substantive activities of the regional centres should be funded from voluntary contributions. However, provision in the budget for administrative costs had greatly advanced efforts to solicit voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and foundations. As a result, the centre for Asia and the Pacific would soon have its own building, built with the assistance of Japanese non-governmental organizations on a site donated by the Government of Nepal.

47. Mr. SAHID (Morocco) referred to the proposed 15 new posts for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee was not convinced that all of them were needed, while the Controller had said that without them the

(Mr. Sahid, Morocco)

Office's effectiveness would be greatly hampered. Because his delegation considered the activities of that Office very important, it thought that the Secretary-General's proposal should be approved. Since, in the view of the Advisory Committee, there was no specific legislative mandate for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy, it proposed transferring the provision for one D-1 and two General Service posts to section 24 and deleting the remainder of the estimate. As his delegation attached considerable importance to the fiftieth anniversary celebration for which the Office was responsible, it supported the position expressed by the representative of Australia on that issue.

48. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that new demands on the United Nations made it necessary to enhance the Secretariat's capacity in the policy field. That was why his delegation, like Morocco's, considered the functions of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General very important and thought that its resources should be improved. He had been surprised at the Secretary-General's proposal to downgrade the post of Executive Secretary to the Board of Auditors from the D-1 to the P-5 level, as well as by the Advisory Committee's decision not to approve that action. Like the representatives of Australia and Nepal, he supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to convert the P-5 post of Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to established status. That change would place the Kathmandu centre on an equal footing with those at Lima and Lomé and would make it possible to attract a high-calibre individual for the post of Director. He, too, wondered why the centre's Director had to operate out of New York, as that hampered his work and increased expenses. Finally, with regard to paragraph II.52 of the Advisory Committee's report, he wished to know whether the United Nations was paying rent on facilities for any peace-keeping operations.

49. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba), referring to section 3C of the proposed programme budget and specifically to subprogramme 4, wished to reiterate that activities to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections could be carried out only with a legislative mandate. General Assembly resolution 46/137 on that subject did not provide for a large electoral assistance unit and stipulated that assistance could be given only at the request of the Member State in question and the competent United Nations organ. In his introductory statement, the Controller had said that, owing to the increase in the number of requests, each staff member was currently responsible for 12 countries. She wondered whether all of the cases contributing to that workload were the result of requests in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/137. With respect to paragraph 3C.37, she noted that, according to the Controller, the resident coordinator was asked to monitor the electoral process when due agreement had been reached and that, in the light of experience, the Secretary-General intended to limit those activities as far as possible. Her country was among the many countries referred to in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/48/16 (Parts I and II)) which believed that those functions should not be entrusted to the resident coordinator, and in that respect, she wished to associate herself with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. Lastly, the Secretary-General's intentions seemed inconsistent with

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(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

paragraph 3C.38, which spoke of establishing an institutional memory with regard to electoral assistance. Perhaps the Secretariat could comment on that discrepancy.

50. Her delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendations on section 4. It had serious reservations about proposals to finance certain posts from the regular budget rather than from extrabudgetary resources. Noting the reference in paragraph 4.5 to the enforcement aspect of peace-keeping operations, she said that, pending legislation on that subject, power of enforcement should not be associated with peace-keeping activities. She endorsed what had been said during the general debate on the inclusion of development activities in peace-keeping operations.

51. Mr. ELZIMAITY (Egypt) that the Committee would need to devote considerable time and effort to the question of the 68 additional posts proposed by the Secretary-General. Clearly, the Advisory Committee's recommendations were based on information provided by the Secretariat and had been influenced by the Secretariat's use of the "vacancy pool" and by post movements related to restructuring. Since the Advisory Committee might not have shown sufficient flexibility in some instances, his delegation requested that the same information should be supplied to the Fifth Committee to assist it in its deliberations. With respect to the 15 new posts for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, his delegation joined with those of Morocco and Pakistan in supporting that proposal, especially since most of the posts would be filled by current staff members. Similarly, it supported the Secretary-General's position regarding the posts for the Office of the Special Adviser for Public Policy.

52. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), responding to the Controller's statement of the previous day, said that it should come as no surprise that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The Controller's blanket rejection of those recommendations represented yet another extraordinary step towards the total destruction of the budget process and control by Member States. His delegation could not agree that the Secretary-General's request were a minimum, since the Secretariat could not substantiate the need for them. One question not adequately addressed in the Controller's statement had been the impact of the large number of regular-budget staff on peace-keeping operations, and his delegation would like to know how many posts were filled by temporary personnel, as well as the actual vacancy rates, taking into account the possible time-lag between the posting of a regular-budget staff member to the field and the hiring of a temporary replacement. That information was essential if the Fifth Committee was to be in a position to approve the revised budget.

53. He noted the Advisory Committee's concern at the additional burden that might be imposed on the Board of Auditors by the growth in the Organization's activities and, in particular, its peace-keeping operations. Although the General Assembly had called for increased expenditure on external auditing during its forty-seventh session, the related provision in the regular budget appeared to represent a slight reduction, and there had been no increase in that respect in the peace-keeping budgets. There seemed to be an understanding,

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

although perhaps unconscious, that the external audit function should be short-funded in order not to expose the Organization's many serious management problems. That was particularly evident with respect to peace-keeping operations, since there was still no external auditor's report on the newer ones.

54. His delegation agreed wholeheartedly with the Advisory Committee's conclusion that there was no legislative mandate for the Office of the Special Adviser and that funding for it should be deleted.

55. Regarding chapter II of the ACABQ report, his delegation would appreciate some indication of when the report on the activities of the regional disarmament centres would be available, because without that report it would have difficulty approving more funding for them. It agreed with the Advisory Committee that a workload analysis of the Electoral Assistance Unit should be undertaken. However, his delegation was surprised that ACABQ had not made similar recommendations with respect to other areas of the budget in which there was obvious overstaffing and urged the General Assembly to mandate a workload analysis of the entire Secretariat for 1994.

56. His delegation was pleased to note that all meetings of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space now took place in Vienna and hoped that the same was true of meetings of its Legal Subcommittee.

57. With respect to the adequacy or inadequacy of regular budget funding for peace-keeping operations, in the absence of the very necessary report on those activities, his delegation was not in a position to consider the matter. Finally, regarding the budget request for the International Court of Justice based on increased workload, it would like information on the number of cases before the Court for each of the past five years.

58. Mr. RAE (India) said that, on the whole, his delegation agreed with the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, but that it did have slightly different views on some issues. For instance, with regard to the Board of Auditors, his delegation believed that it would need increased resources to enable it to cover peace-keeping operations and regretted the stagnation, even decline, of its financing in past years. His delegation would welcome clarification on the division of responsibility between the two Assistant Secretaries-General in the Department of Political Affairs. It supported the proposed reclassification of the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs from the D-1 to the D-2 level for substantive reasons but would reluctantly accept the Advisory Committee's decision to defer a recommendation on the proposal.

59. More generally, the ratio of General Service staff to Professional staff must be looked at, especially in the light of the increased use of computer technology. In paragraph II.49 of its report, the Advisory Committee addressed

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(Mr. Rae, India)

itself to the question of greater standardization of supplies for peace-keeping operations. While standardization was desirable, his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that it was essential to take into consideration the specific circumstances of each operation.

60. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that in paragraphs 13, 17 and 18 of its report, the Advisory Committee had described two areas in which it had had problems understanding the justification for the Secretary-General's proposals. If the Fifth Committee was to be able to resolve the uncertainties to which the Advisory Committee had drawn attention, it would need to be provided with the same information that had been submitted to the Advisory Committee and any other information substantiating the existence of an adequate legislative mandate for the Secretary-General's proposals.

61. Mr. GJESDAHL (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the Nordic countries were firm supporters of United Nations activities concerning preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, for which there was an increased demand. They therefore welcomed the proposal in section 3B of the proposed programme budget for strengthening the Department of Political Affairs and were concerned that the cuts recommended by the Advisory Committee might not prove cost-effective given the alternatives to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking.

62. The Nordic countries noted the Advisory Committee's suggestion to clarify the concept and criteria for United Nations electoral assistance in relation to resource requirements and would welcome such clarification, taking into account, among other things, the mandates relating to electoral assistance.

63. Since there were greater demands on Headquarters to direct and support peace-keeping operations, they welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and integrate the Field Operations Division into the Department. Both of those initiatives were based on General Assembly resolutions and the Nordic countries would like to recall that the Fourth Committee had adopted, at the current session, two resolutions on peace-keeping under agenda item 87 which would require an enhancement of the Secretariat's capacity in that field. The increased core funding for the Department under the regular budget that was proposed seemed to be a minimum for ensuring an effective and efficient management of peace-keeping operations. While the Nordic countries agreed that efficiency in some areas could be improved, they did not believe that all the Advisory Committee's proposals for budget cuts adequately reflected the priority now attached to peace-keeping activities.

64. The Nordic countries considered that the resource requirements set out in the Secretary-General's report on the Support Account for Peace-keeping Operations (A/48/470) should be considered in the light of the proposals in the regular budget and they looked forward to receiving the Advisory Committee's report on the requirements.

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65. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) asked when the United Nations telephone directory and staff list would be updated.

66. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that, in its consideration of the proposed programme budget, the Committee should base itself on the report of the Advisory Committee. The first concern should be to determine whether there was a legislative mandate for the Secretary-General's proposals.

67. The second concern was that all mandated activities should be fully funded at the programme budget level. Much had been said about priorities. His delegation agreed with the view of the Controller that priorities did not necessarily mean increased resources at every stage of the exercise. It did not agree with the idea that priorities were goals to be achieved within the period 1992-1997. In that connection, he drew attention to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which defined a priority as a preferential rating for the allocation of limited resources.

68. With regard to the Advisory Committee's proposal on the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly must decide whether it wished to endorse the Secretary-General's proposal to create a self-sufficient executive office or whether to continue as before. The Secretary-General's proposal might insulate him from the heads of substantive departments, which would be unfortunate since their expertise was most valuable.

69. He commended the Advisory Committee for pointing out where mandates had not been observed. The Fifth Committee must be able to rely on the Advisory Committee to advise it on the proper allocation of resources to the Secretariat so that it could carry out mandated activities.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
33rd meeting
held on
Thursday, 9 December 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OSELLA (Argentina)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (*continued*)

First reading (*continued*)

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Part II. Political affairs (*continued*)

Part III. International justice and law (*continued*)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/48/SR.33
16 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Osella (Argentina), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/48/6, A/48/7, A/48/16 (Part I) and (Part II) and A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/C.5/48/26)

First reading (continued)

Part I. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination (continued)

Part II. Political affairs (continued)

Part III. International justice and law (continued)

1. Ms. SAEKI (Japan), referring to section 1 of the proposed programme budget, said that the proposed downgrading of the post of Executive Secretary of the Board of Auditors from D-1 to P-5 was a matter of some concern to her delegation and should be reviewed. Her delegation was also concerned by the possible duplication of work between the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations and other departments, such as the Department of Public Information (DPI). In addition, she would welcome clarification of the Secretary-General's proposal concerning the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

2. Turning to section 3 (Political affairs), she took note of the recent report of the Secretary-General on high-level posts (A/C.5/48/9), in which the Secretary-General proposed to consolidate all political action under a single under-secretary-general. She hoped that the implementation of that proposal would strengthen the Department of Political Affairs. Her delegation supported the proposed allocation of resources for such areas as preventive diplomacy and electoral assistance. On the other hand, in view of the rapid changes in the international political situation in recent years, a review should be undertaken of resources allocated to obsolete or low-priority activities. Her delegation supported many of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in that regard.

3. On the question of arms control and disarmament, her delegation believed that the Organization's activities in that field were of vital importance and that adequate resources must accordingly be allocated.

4. She wished to request additional information on the proposed transfer of secretariat services to the General Assembly and Security Council from the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) to the Division of Administration and Management (DAM). She would also welcome an explanation of the merits of transferring the Field Operations Division (FOD) to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO). She agreed that DPKO needed to be strengthened but

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stressed that that should be done in a rational manner. Her delegation also believed that clear standards should be set for the division of responsibility between the support account for peace-keeping operations and the regular budget.

5. Finally, with reference to legal activities, her delegation considered that the expenses of the International War Crimes Tribunal should be met from the regular budget.

6. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), commenting on the report of the Advisory Committee (A/48/7), requested clarification as to how the Advisory Committee had arrived at the figure of 187 per cent representing the increase in appropriations for the Trusteeship Council.

7. His delegation supported the proposed resource allocation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People pending the conclusion of the current peace process.

8. In paragraph II.10, the Advisory Committee recommended the deletion of one General Service post from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on the grounds that the justification for the post was inadequate. His delegation was of the view that, since the justification for the deletion of the post was also inadequate, the proposal should be approved in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Office.

9. The question of preventive diplomacy (para. II.11) had recently assumed vital importance, particularly since the presentation by the Secretary-General of An Agenda for Peace. Accordingly, the Security Council had sought to strengthen the role of preventive diplomacy, which had a direct impact on reducing the cost of peace-keeping operations. His delegation therefore supported the allocation of resources and the creation of the posts requested by the Secretary-General.

10. On the question of the redeployment of posts, his delegation would await the results of the study being undertaken by ACABQ before giving its views.

11. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) regretted that much vital information had not been made available to members of the Committee on the complex item with which it was currently dealing. He hoped that delegations would receive all relevant documents before the start of informal consultations.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would make available to the Committee all available documentation in order to facilitate its work during the informal consultations.

13. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to questions put earlier by members of the Committee, said that recosting was done in three stages. The budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995, for example, were based on the inflation and currency exchange rates prevailing at the end of 1992. The first stage of

(Mr. Takasu)

recosting must therefore be undertaken during the current session before the programme budget proposals were adopted. The second recosting exercise would take place at the end of 1994 based on the first performance report and using the most recent available indicators. The third stage would take place at the end of 1995, based on the second performance report. If recosting to adjust for movements in currency and inflation rates were to be retroactive, as suggested by some delegations, a number of practical problems would arise. In the context of the 1982-1983 biennium, for example, recosting of the budget at the first performance report had permitted the reimbursement of $73 million to Member States. Under the procedure whereby recosting would only be done at the end of the biennium, those funds would not have been credited to Member States for another year. If, on the other hand, the level of the dollar substantially decreased during a given biennium, and if recosting were to be retroactive at the end of the biennium, the Secretary-General would find himself in a position in which he would be obliged to incur expenditures well in excess of appropriations. For those reasons, together with the explanations which he had given the previous day, he considered that the current system of three recostings during each biennium was a reasonable one.

14. On the question of vacancy rates, he pointed out that where a staff member under the regular budget was sent on mission and his or her post remained vacant, that post was considered as vacant. If, however, a short-term replacement staff was recruited, then the post was no longer considered vacant, since there was a staff member against it, paid from resources appropriated for that post. He had noted the suggestion that the vacancy rate should be used retroactively to determine expenditures for the following biennium. He recalled that a number of temporary measures, including a freeze on recruitment, had been adopted during the 1992-1993 financial crisis. The current vacancy rate was therefore much higher than historical levels. Moreover, significant fluctuations had been recorded during the current biennium. Use of the most recent vacancy rate would thus create problems, since, following the adoption by the General Assembly of the budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995, the Secretary-General intended to lift the freeze on recruitment.

15. With regard to the transfer of posts between budget sections, the Secretariat had noted the recommendations of ACABQ concerning the importance of compliance with the financial regulations of the Organization. He wished to point out, however, that the Secretary-General's revised estimates for 1992-1993 had been finally approved by the General Assembly in May 1993, following which the Secretariat had been fully preoccupied with putting together the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Among other things, those proposals contained his requests for formalizing adjustments to staffing resources allocated between different sections of the budget, which had initially been made on a temporary basis during the current biennium. It would have been neither practical nor desirable to submit interim, piecemeal requests for redeployment of staffing and other resources between budget sections during the period between May and October 1993 when the budget proposals were being finalized. The interests of budgetary transparency would not have been served,

(Mr. Takasu)

since the structure of the budget in terms of the identification of the relevant resources under the various parts and sections was also in transition. He wished to assure the Committee, however, that in the proposed redeployment of resources a review had been undertaken of the importance and validity of each post. Furthermore, following approval of the proposed programme budget, the Secretariat would strictly observe the relevant financial regulations concerning the need to obtain the authority of ACABQ when transferring resources between sections of the budget during a given biennium.

16. On the question of the provisions for the Board of Auditors, he explained that those provisions reflected the resource requirements submitted to the Controller by the Board. The post of Executive Secretary of the Board of Auditors had been classified at the D-1 level in 1985. Following the retirement of the incumbent, a review of the functions attached to the post had been carried out and it had been reclassified at the P-5 level. A capable person had recently been appointed to the post at the P-5 level and he wished to assure members of the Board that an effective level of services would be maintained.

17. With regard to the Department of Political Affairs, the Secretary-General had proposed that the Department should be headed by a single under-secretary-general supported by two assistant secretaries-general. That structure would enable the under-secretary-general to exercise policy oversight, with responsibilities divided between the two assistant secretaries-general on a broad geographical basis. The prime responsibility of one of the assistant secretaries-general would be for African issues; the precise division of the other functions to be carried out by the Department was still being determined.

18. With regard to the mandate of the Electoral Assistance Unit, he recalled that General Assembly resolution 46/137 set out the mandate of the Electoral Assistance Unit and required that the competent organ of the United Nations should be notified of requests for electoral verification. As defined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/668/Add.1), electoral verification was a large-scale operation in which the United Nations was involved in all stages of the electoral process, including registration, campaigning and polling, with a sufficient number of observers to allow for a comprehensive presence throughout the country. Operations other than verification, ranging from requests from a Member State for technical assistance and sending a political officer to follow and report on an electoral process, to the provision of coordination and support to international observers invited by a Member State conducting elections, were considered to fall within the general mandate of General Assembly resolution 46/137. A list of the requests of Member States for electoral assistance and action taken by the Secretariat would shortly be made available to the Committee.

19. On the question of arrangements concerning rental charges for United Nations missions in the field, he pointed out that such charges were usually borne by the Organization.

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20. As for the workload of the International Court of Justice, he noted that there had been an increase in the number of cases brought before the Court since the biennium 1988-1989.

21. Responding to questions put by members of the Committee concerning the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in general, and the one in Katmandu in particular, he said that estimates of requirements, the functional breakdown of staff and statements of the financial position of each Centre had been submitted to the Fifth Committee on 24 November 1992. In addition, since the establishment of the Regional Centres, the Secretary-General had submitted to the General Assembly each year a comprehensive report on the activities of the Centres which had been carried out during the previous year and had outlined the proposed programme for the following year. A new consolidated report was being prepared and would be made available to ACABQ. On the question of the physical location of the Director of the Regional Centre at Katmandu, he reported that, on a temporary basis, the Director was conducting his work from Headquarters due in part to the general shortage of premises at the disposal of the United Nations system in Katmandu. The Centre had received a grant of US$ 500,000 to construct office space, and the Secretariat was seeking to clarify a number of technical, legal and administrative matters before pursuing concrete plans. Another reason for the Director's temporary location at Headquarters was the fact that insufficient resources had been raised from donor States for local administrative costs, in stark contrast to the contributions received for the substantive activities of the Centre. As soon as the post of the Director was regularized and the financing of the basic local staff assured, the need for that temporary situation would cease to exist.

22. Responding to the question concerning the mandate of the regional centres to deal with issues of preventive diplomacy, he assured the Committee that there was no overlap or duplication of activities between the Office for Disarmament Affairs and other units within the Department of Political Affairs. The regional centres and the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament were concerned exclusively with disarmament, arms limitation and confidence-building measures, which would enhance the security of Member States by preventing tensions and conflicts among them. The term "preventive diplomacy" was therefore used in a very narrow sense and expressed a general notion that conflict could be prevented through the conclusion of disarmament agreements which reflected the security requirements of States. He was confident that references to preventive diplomacy in the context of the disarmament programmes could be adjusted in such a way as to avoid any further misunderstandings.

23. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan), referring to chapter II, paragraph II.52 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/48/7), noted the Controller's comment that the headquarters accommodation of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was not the only case in which the United Nations paid the rental for such accommodation. He wondered why UNMOGIP was the only peace-keeping operations singled out in the report of ACABQ and hoped that the Secretary-General would include information on other peace-keeping operations in the performance report for 1992-1993.

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24. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation maintained its reservations with regard to the transfer of resources and continued to believe that decisions were being taken by the Secretariat without the authorization of the General Assembly; the request for increased staffing of the Electoral Assistance Unit represented an instance of such action, since, in fact, General Assembly resolution 46/137, which had been cited by the Controller as the legislative authority for the proposal, specifically stated that the staff of the proposed unit should be small. Her delegation therefore could not agree that new resources should be allocated for the Section; on the contrary, consideration should be given to reducing it. Similarly, in the case of the proposal regarding preventive diplomacy, the authorizing resolution, General Assembly resolution 47/120, stated that such activity should be undertaken on the basis of the consent of the competent bodies, but she could find no reference to any request by the Secretariat for such consent. Her delegation also wondered why no reference had been made in the budget, except in the section concerning travel costs, to so important a matter as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which was, in her delegation's view, an action proposal and not a mere declaration of principle.

25. Mr. RAMOS (Spain) said that the explanation provided by the Controller with regard to the vacancy rate was inconsistent with what the Secretary-General had stated in the Fifth Committee concerning the number of United Nations staff members assigned to peace-keeping operations. He therefore agreed with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee regarding the lack of information supplied by the Secretariat and the disadvantage at which it left Member States. An effort must be made to bring the cost estimates provided by the Secretariat into greater conformity with reality.

26. Mr. ORR (Canada) said that there seemed to be a discrepancy between the figures for inflation used by the Secretariat and those published officially. He also shared the views expressed by the representative of Spain with regard to the figures given for the number of staff involved in peace-keeping operations, and felt that some further explanation of that question was required. With regard to the question of recosting, his delegation considered that the inflation factor must also be taken into account; the fluctuation of currency valuations was only one side of the equation.

27. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) said that the ongoing restructuring process had not only delayed the submission to the Committee of the relevant information but had considerably hindered the assessment of the programme budget proposal and the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/212. His delegation therefore welcomed the announcement by the Secretary-General that the time for consolidation was approaching.

28. His delegation's position of principle with regard to the proposed programme budget had been clearly expressed in the statement made during the general debate by the representative of Colombia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77. His delegation had therefore been heartened by the Advisory Committee's endorsement of the Group's views concerning some of the basic

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(Mr. Damico, Brazil)

assumptions underlying the proposed programme budget, and particularly its view that the budget must be the translation into financial terms of intergovernmental mandates and should not be transformed into a policy instrument. The so-called "technical parameters" of the budget, which had an across-the-board impact, such as recosting, vacancy rates, non-recurrent expenditures and the delayed impact of new posts, which had been mentioned in the Colombian representative's statement, had also been stressed in the report of the ACABQ.

29. Commenting on Parts I through III, he expressed the hope that the Board of Auditors would make recommendations and requests, through the Advisory Committee, if the resources allocated to it were not commensurate with the increased tasks it had been assigned. It was also his delegation's view, in keeping with the Advisory Committee's recommendations, that the issue of the integrated offices should be dealt with in the context of the relevant programme budget implications document arising from the draft resolution currently being discussed in the Second Committee. With respect to Part II, it supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretariat should submit revised proposals concerning the subsidiary organs served by the Department of Political Affairs if new intergovernmental mandates arising from new developments in the field so required.

30. His delegation welcomed the endorsement by the ACABQ of the request for additional posts in the Office for Security Council and General Assembly Affairs, which was justified in view of the increased resort by the Security Council to the imposition of sanctions and the ad hoc committees set up to administer them. With respect to Part III, his delegation expected that the Secretariat would present proposals in the context of the revised estimates addressing the impact of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

31. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation remained unconvinced that the vacancy rates estimated by the Secretariat took into account the actual situation; it continued to believe that the vacancy rates given were too high and that any revisions proposed in the performance reports would not necessarily capture all of the savings which should be repaid to Member States. Nor did it accept the idea that the vacancy rates must be kept low in order to deal with the Organization's financial situation; if there was insufficient funding, that should be dealt with by eliminating programmes and continuing the hiring freeze.

32. In general, his delegation was more than ever convinced that the budgetary process was in a shambles and remained seriously concerned about the accuracy of the budget figures and the usefulness of the process being followed, which had the effect of depriving Member States of any meaningful oversight function with regard to the budget. Too much of the information supplied to the Committee was difficult to understand and some of it was meaningless, while the information it did in fact require was not available. For those reasons, his delegation was not optimistic about what the Committee would be able to achieve before the end of the year.

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33. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to the comments of delegations, said that the Secretariat would need time to compile the statistical data that had been requested.

34. In response to the questions about the Electoral Assistance Unit, he said that the Unit had been set up after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 46/137 on enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections. Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes, as reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 46/130, remained a basic principle. More professional posts were needed in order to support the Unit, which would act as a focal point in handling the increasing number of requests by Member States. The Secretary-General had accordingly requested an increase of one Professional post. He felt that the increase was justified given the number of requests for assistance and that it did not constitute a departure from the resolutions of the General Assembly.

35. The Secretariat would submit data at a later stage regarding the so-called discrepancies and inconsistencies in the treatment of vacancies. He did not think that the presentation was inconsistent.

36. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation would return to the question of the Electoral Assistance Unit in the informal discussions. She welcomed the assurance that the Secretariat took the provisions of resolution 46/130 fully into account. She urged that the conference paper on legislative mandates requested by the representative of the United Kingdom, should be made available to the Committee.

37. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the conclusions and recommendations regarding Parts I, II and III contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/48/16, Part II), and asked whether the Committee was ready to endorse them.

38. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation would be unable to do so until it had received the information on legislative mandates.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.45 p.m.

Part IV. International cooperation for development and Part V. Regional cooperation for development

39. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to begin its consideration of Parts IV and V of the proposed programme budget, noting that the total estimates proposed by the Secretary-General amounted to US$ 314,045,200 for Part IV and US$ 373,423,900 for Part V while the Advisory Committee had recommended appropriations totalling US$ 292,178,000 for Part IV and US$ 343,752,400 for Part V.

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40. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that Parts IV and V dealt with the various economic and social sections of the Secretariat, in New York, Geneva and the regional commissions. The main element in the restructuring of the economic and social sectors at Headquarters had been their consolidation into three new Departments. The utmost effort had been made to intensify coordination among them. In the final design of the budget for the three, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services, an effort had been made to focus resources as much as possible on essential activities.

41. In section 8, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General had requested a number of posts to deal with activities during the biennium in connection with the proposed convention to combat desertification, based on the mandate given in General Assembly resolution 47/188. The Advisory Committee had recommended that provision should be made for 1994 only, and that the 1995 portion should be deducted. A draft resolution on desertification was currently under consideration in the Second Committee. If the General Assembly decided to abolish the 1995 portion of staff costs, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General would need to submit proposals to cover that cost later, in the context of the budgetary implications of the resolution.

42. Also in section 8, the Secretary-General had requested an amount of $500,000 for the United Nations contribution to the financing of the activities of Non-Governmental Liaison Services. The provision had resulted from the decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in 1992 that those activities should be financed through cost-sharing arrangements by the participating organizations in 1994-1995 (para. IV.15). The sum approved by the Joint United Nations Information Committee, under the umbrella of ACC, as the 1994-1995 budget for non-governmental Liaison Services was $1,950,000. Of that, the United Nations portion was $500,000. The sister organizations involved, including UNDP and UNICEF had already made or were about to make budgetary provision to that end, and the Secretary-General hoped that authorization would be given for the grant so that the United Nations could participate in those activities together with the other agencies of the system.

43. Also in section 8, the Secretary-General requested an amount of $110,900, including resource growth of $55,600, as the United Nations share of the costs of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC). The activities in question had been carried out by the United Nations together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), according to a cost-sharing formula previously approved by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly, most recently in 1984. The United Nations share was the same as that of ILO and FAO. In 1990, they had increased their contribution, and the Secretary-General would like to do the same. The recommendation by the Advisory Committee that the proposed resource growth of $58,900 should be deleted would make the United Nations position vis-à-vis the other agencies difficult. The General Assembly

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(Mr. Takasu)

attached considerable importance to the role of cooperatives, as indicated in its resolution 47/90 on the role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends, which invited COPAC to maintain and increase its programme of support to the international cooperative movement.

44. There were two points to which he wished to draw attention in section 9, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. The Secretary-General had requested six additional Professional posts for activities on micro-economic issues. The Advisory Committee recommended the deletion of all six posts. The request for new posts was related to activities mandated by General Assembly resolutions 46/199, 47/171 and 47/187. The legislative mandate was thus well-documented. Because of the urgent nature of the activities, six posts had already been temporarily allocated to the Department. The Secretary-General was requesting that that provision should be regularized for the next biennium in view of the continuing nature of the activity. The posts should be allocated to the Department pending the evaluation of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of its activities, in order to ensure continuation of programme delivery.

45. The further point related to activities in connection with the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in September 1994. The arrangements requested by the Secretary-General would enable the Secretariat to make careful preparations for the Conference. The Advisory Committee had reduced the number of work-months requested by half. That would mean that the preparations for that important Conference would not be fully funded. The Conference was to take place in September and the six work-months proposed by the Advisory Committee would end in June. Moreover, further work would be necessary after the Conference to prepare the report to the General Assembly. The Secretary-General therefore considered that 12 work-months of assistance were necessary.

46. Regarding section 10, Department for Development Support and Management Services, the Advisory Committee recommended keeping the appropriation at the same level with no adjustment, pending the review of the impact of the imminent transfer of the Office for Project Services to the Department. The Secretary-General felt strongly that his estimate for the Department should be approved.

47. In connection with section 11 A, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), he drew attention to the reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee in respect of transnational corporations. Unfortunately, because of the restructuring and the transfer of activities in connection with transnational corporations from the former Centre for Transnational Corporations to UNCTAD, for the purposes of the presentation of the budget table 11 A.50 did not indicate the full scale of the resources available to the Centre for Transnational Corporations in the 1992-1993 budget. Under that budget, $740,000 had been available for consultants and $140,000 for expert groups. The Secretary-General had requested the amount of $827,500 including an increase of $500,000. The Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction of $269,000, which would mean that the programmes relating to transnational corporations would receive less than in the previous biennium.

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48. Mr. STOCKL (Rapporteur, the Committee for Programme and Coordination) drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 84 to 174 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/48/16 (Part II)), and also to paragraph 33, in which the Committee expressed its concern about possible overlapping and duplication among the three new Departments and between them and other organizations of the United Nations system, noting that the Advisory Committee had expressed a similar concern.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
34th meeting
held on
Friday, 10 December 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. HADID	(Algeria)
later:	Mrs. EMERSON (Vice-Chairman)	(Portugal)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

- General debate (continued)
- First reading (continued)
  - Part IV. International cooperation for development (continued)
  - Part V. Regional cooperation for development (continued)

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A/C.5/48/SR.34
22 February 1994

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/48/6, A/48/7, A/48/16 (Parts I and II) and A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/C.5/48/26)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. KERSTEIN (Slovenia) said that his delegation understood the reasons for a modest real growth in the overall level of resources for the following biennium in view of the increasing responsibilities of the United Nations. It did not, however, believe that the departure from the budget outline to the tune of $47 million, as set out in General Assembly resolution 47/213, was justified. He supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the matter.

2. Slovenia welcomed the priorities identified in the proposed programme budget and appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen activities such as peace-keeping, humanitarian affairs and human rights. The proposed increase was, however, insufficient: the percentage growth of resources for the programmes might appear substantial, but the basis for the calculation of growth was rather small.

3. The world-wide concern with the protection of human rights had led to a significant expansion of the activities entrusted to the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. To meet the challenges of its new mandates, it was planned that the Centre should have a new organizational structure. Yet most of the proposed growth for that purpose related solely to financing posts already temporarily redeployed to the Centre. With the request from the World Conference on Human Rights for a substantial increase in resources for human rights programmes, his delegation believed that the proposed increase under that heading was not sufficient. With regard to peace-keeping operations he requested a more comprehensive explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating the Field Operations Division in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

4. Despite the effort that had been put into the preparation of the proposed programme budget, too little attention had been paid to identifying areas of lower priority which could be curtailed or eliminated altogether. In that connection he noted the current restructuring and rationalization of the United Nations, which should result in clearer lines of responsibility and accountability. His delegation therefore supported the establishment of an Office for Inspections and Investigations.

5. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's concern regarding the inadequate response to section II of General Assembly resolution 47/212 B, which had envisaged more than the mere relocation to Vienna of the servicing for the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. He also wondered why there were proposals to increase the responsibilities of the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva in matters for which

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(Mr. Kerstein, Slovenia)

Vienna would, for geographical and other reasons be the most logical choice. He hoped that the General Assembly's request for additional activities to be relocated to Vienna would be met.

First reading (continued)

Part IV. International cooperation for development (continued)

Part V. Regional cooperation for development (continued)

6. Ms. ERIKSSON-FOGH (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries on section 10, said that the Nordic delegations had severe doubts regarding the proposed incorporation of the Office for Project Services within the Department for Development Support and Management Services. The Governing Council of UNDP had outlined various requirements that should be clarified before the transfer took place, and the Nordic delegations felt that a number of concerns had not been adequately addressed. Accordingly they recommended that the merger should be postponed, and they took note of the views of the Advisory Committee thereon.

7. Regarding the appointment of the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre under section 11B, the Nordic delegations were extremely apprehensive that the post had remained vacant for two years. The resulting uncertainty had had serious consequences for the work of the Centre and the needs of developing countries. A prompt appointment was crucial. The Nordic countries endorsed the relevant recommendations of CPC.

8. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) said that because the organizational structures of the three new departments that had been established in the economic and social sector were still in flux, ACABQ and the Fifth Committee were deprived of information essential for proper consideration of the related budget proposals. Since the preparation and servicing of the International Conference on Population and Development was at stake, his delegation supported the request of the Secretary-General. It also shared the views contained in paragraphs IV.41 and VI.43, concerning the Transnational Corporations, Technology and Investment Division, the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development, and the International Trade Centre. Regrettably, despite repeated calls by Member States, the Secretary-General had not seen fit to make appointments to fill vacancies in the Centre. The Secretariat should provide an explanation for its failure to implement resolution 47/212 B, section I.

9. His country welcomed the allocation in the budget for the post of Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and stressed that the resources for that section should be administered separately from those of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It agreed, in general, with the recommendations regarding regional cooperation for development. With regard to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), however, it requested the secretariat to clarify whether the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/67 relating to the ECA subprogramme on information systems development had been taken into account in the preparation of the proposed budget.

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10. Mr. ELZIMAITY (Egypt), speaking on parts IV and V of the proposed programme budget, welcomed the decision to establish three new departments dealing with economic affairs. He was glad to hear that they would be able to perform efficiently, at least for a limited time, without any increase in expenditure. It was regrettable that ACABQ opposed the proposals to grant those departments a small increase, instead of proposing solutions that impeded their work. Cases in point were the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the preparatory work on the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. If ACABQ really proposed to halve the allocation to the Conference, as it appeared to do, there would be no scope either for preparatory work or for any follow-up.

11. He questioned the methodology on which the distribution of resources among the various programmes in the economoic and social sectors was based. The United Nations should, as a matter of urgency, review its priorities and determine which was more important, human rights or the eradication of poverty. The resources requested for both UNCTAD and the Economic Commission for Africa were meagre compared with those allocated to human rights. Africa had embarked on the Fourth United Nations Development Decade under difficult conditions and it needed all the help it could get. Even the African Economic Community, which had been established in Abuja in June 1991 had not been given sufficient financial or logistical support by the Economic Commission for Africa.

12. With regard to GATT, he said that Africa was the weakest link in the international trading system; indeed, its share had dropped over recent years and if the Uruguay Round was successfully concluded the new provisions would have a harmful effect on the Lomé Convention. Yet it was difficult to establish what proportion of the proposed $2.7 billion expenditure under the proposed programme budget was destined for Africa. In his delegation's view, the most productive use of the money would be to develop the regional centres, such as the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs). Institutions that should be supported were the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning and the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

13. Decentralization should be extended in as many fields as possible, which would include the regional centres. The Economic Commission for Africa, like the other regional commissions, was suffering as a result of bureaucratic rigidity. Greater autonomy in recruitment would be helpful so that the regional commissions could make appointments at levels higher than P-4. A further problem was the very high vacancy rate resulting from the freeze on recruitment. Extrabudgetary resources would shrink because of changes in arrangements for financing UNDP projects and the services of extremely knowledgeable experts, with many years' experience, would be lost. Ultimately, it was for the United Nations to decide what proportion of the budget should be earmarked for the eradication of poverty.

14. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that the General Assembly had rightly decided that economic and social development was one of the most important objectives of United Nations activities. Her delegation was therefore deeply concerned that the proposed programme budget did not reflect the importance of that objective.

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(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

Moreover, it was most regrettable that the sections were presented in such a way that there was no clear definition of priorities or timetables, or the status of subprogrammes. There seemed to be some confusion between programming and budgeting.

15. She requested clarification on the extent to which General Assembly resolutions constituted a mandate. She also requested more information both on the approach to allocating resources to departments which executed operational programmes and on the entire question of decentralization, which was extremely important, particularly in matters relating to energy and natural resources.

16. Her delegation endorsed the remarks in paragraph IV.3 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/48/7), to the effect that there was a need for a clear statement of an overall restructuring plan and a time-frame for its implementation. Since that view had been endorsed by the General Assembly, she requested the Secretariat to put forward proposals for a restructuring timetable. More detail was also needed on the Secretariat structures performing the functions previously carried out by the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. She further asked for information on the action taken following General Assembly resolution 44/215, on eliminating the use of coercive measures against developing countries. She wondered if that was another mandate that had disappeared. If so, it was quite wrong that that should have happened.

17. The statement in paragraph 8.9 of the proposed programme budget, to the effect that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would assume primary responsibility for the preparation of an annual policy report of the Secretary-General on issues which called for concerted international action was too vague and she requested further information. Referring to paragraph 8.22, she said that by implication the future of the Committee for Development Planning was dependent on intergovernmental consultations. Her delegation strongly disagreed with that approach. Meanwhile she requested information on the current status of the consultations. More information should be provided on the proposals regarding the subprogramme structure for activities to be carried out by the Department, which paragraph 8.46 left deliberately vague. The Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Barbados in 1994, should have been included among the issues to which the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA) was to pay special attention.

18. Turning to paragraph 9.9, she asked what mandate there was for the analyses mentioned, and indeed what the purpose of such an approach was. DESIPA could equally usefully concern itself with other matters. Referring to table 9.8, she inquired why substantial growth was proposed for expenditure on furniture and equipment, while spending on contractual services would be reduced considerably. There was no mandate for the activities outlined in paragraph 9.30. The same applied to subprogramme 5 in paragraph 9.31. In all the instances which she had mentioned a very selective approach was evident.

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(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

19. With reference to section 10, her delegation was concerned both by the reductions in expenditure and by the uncertainty of the relationship between the medium-term plan and the budget. On the latter point, she pointed to the different emphases of paragraphs 10.24 and 10.35. Her delegation could not approve the approach of either paragraph, particularly in the light of programme 21. One important victim of the reduction of resources was UNCTAD, which would receive 50 per cent less resources for scientific and technical activities and 25 per cent less for activities relating to transnational corporations. The recommendations of ACABQ would further reduce the resources allocated to UNCTAD by cutting the provision for consultants. The Secretariat should provide specific information on the actual distribution of resources and on the redeployment of posts from the activities of transnational corporations and from science and technology to other sections.

20. Mr. OWADE (Kenya) said that the Kenyan delegation endorsed the comments made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and by China concerning the budget proposals. In particular, it supported the programmes described in section 12B. With regard to the provision for an under-secretary-general post for Habitat, the mandates contained in resolution 47/212 B and in the resolutions of the Commission on Human Settlements concerning the appointment of its Executive Director must be respected. Habitat must be given adequate resources to carry out the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and to prepare for the Habitat II Conference. It was clear that those activities were the responsibility of the Executive Director and they might be adversely affected by the delay in making the appointment.

21. UNEP and Habitat must retain their separate mandates, and the Kenyan delegation could not support the Secretary-General's proposals concerning their common executive direction. Furthermore, the Controller had said that the appointment of the Executive Director of Habitat would take place as soon as the General Assembly had approved a post at the assistant secretary-general level. That was an unacceptable condition because the Secretary-General had already been given a clear mandate in the matter.

22. The Kenyan delegation endorsed the comments made by the representative of Egypt concerning the inadequacy of the resources allocated to Africa; in particular, the MULPOCs required strengthening.

23. The Executive Director of ITC must also be appointed quickly, because the Centre performed important functions of benefit to the developing countries. The comments made by the representative of Cameroon concerning allocations for ECA were also welcome. In particular, ECA must carry out the activities in statistical information systems development described under programme paragraph 6 in section 15.

24. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that while parts IV and V of the programme budget covered major priorities of the medium-term plan, the proposed division of responsibilities and labour among the six functional units funded under part IV and the regional commissions funded under part V would lead not to greater

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(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

effectiveness and programme delivery but simply to overexpenditure on cumbersome administrative units. In examining the resources allocated to those sections, a closer look should be taken at the relation between the regular budget and extrabudgetary funds. Australia, Canada and New Zealand agreed with the Controller that it might not be possible to present expenditure from voluntary contributions in the same way as regular budget estimates of expenditure were presented. The argument that economic development priorities in the medium-term plan were not receiving adequate resources based solely on the share of regular budget expenditure allocated to the programme was, however, very misleading.

25. With regard to the many economic and social programmes covered by part IV, he noted that the continuous restructuring of the Secretariat had probably not made it more cost-effective or streamlined. For example, the creation, in the current year, of three departments to replace one had resulted in the addition of two executive offices of doubtful benefit to the programmes.

26. Once again using a narrow definition of "mandate" to satisfy a political view, ACABQ had recommended that a grant of $500,000 to the Non-governmental Liaison Services should be cut; contrary to the contention of ACABQ, numerous legislative mandates existed, including decisions of the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Interregional Conference of Small Island Countries on Sustainable Development and Environment in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and, especially, Agenda 21, which discussed the role of non-governmental organizations at length.

27. The Advisory Committee recommended the deletion of posts from the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, which had played a major role in building the credibility of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. Australia, Canada and New Zealand felt that the posts in question should be retained pending further review. They agreed, however, that the relationship between DESIPA and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) should be reviewed and endorse the recommendation on a provisional basis, subject to further information.

28. With regard to section 10, since no new information had been received on the overall structure of the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the three delegations would support the transfer of the Office for Project Services (OPS) into that department. They emphasized that no increase should occur in regular budget resources over the maintenance level proposed and requested confirmation that the implementation of that decision would not result in supernumeraries. They also emphasized that the resources ostensibly allocated to the natural resources and energy sector should not be wasted by being diverted into a politically inspired decentralization plan. Furthermore, in the overview of section 10, the Secretary-General had stated that there would be no need for an implementing structure for technical assistance projects in any of the Headquarters economic cooperation divisions once the Office for Project Services was integrated. In the budget proposals, however, significant extrabudgetary and regular programme funds were allocated to operational

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(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

activities in each of the three departments: an explanation of that seeming contradiction would be necessary before the budget could be approved.

29. Australia, Canada and New Zealand requested the Secretariat to explain why no executive director had been appointed for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT. That post was budgeted at the assistant secretary-general level but had not been included in the recently circulated list of high-level regular budget posts. Presumably, that post was financed jointly with GATT and was thus outside the scope of the regular budget.

30. The three countries fully supported the integration of the administrative functions of Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), under section 12, which would make it possible to eliminate posts or redeploy them to substantive functions.

31. Unfortunately, part V offered extremely limited guidance with regard to the regional commissions and the Committee would therefore be obliged to look at those estimates ab initio. With regard to paragraphs V.3 and V.5 of the ACABQ report, if the administrative structures of the regional commissions were indeed too large, the resources should be redeployed and administrative posts abolished. Furthermore, in the absence of any justification for not doing so, the cuts in travel and equipment applied to other sections must also be applied to the regional commissions, as should the general rule that all post reclassifications should be deferred. Furthermore, no justification had been provided for the transfer of resources from the regular programme of technical cooperation to the regional commissions, and particularly to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and full details would be required from the Secretariat before that transfer could be approved.

32. Mr. RONNEBERG (Marshall Islands), speaking also on behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands, said that the Non-governmental Liaison Services were of great importance to those countries, and that they were profoundly concerned by the recommendation in paragraph IV.15 of the ACABQ report to eliminate the contribution to that body. Member States had indicated in numerous resolutions their strong support for non-governmental organizations and for the participation of those organizations in United Nations conferences, particularly those conferences that stemmed from follow-up activities to UNCED. The six countries opposed the recommended deletion, as it would seriously undermine the ability of non-governmental organizations to participate in such activities. Furthermore, he wished to draw attention to paragraph 20 of the report of the Committee on Information to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly (A/37/21) and to resolution 37/94 B, paragraph 1, which provided the legislative mandate for those activities.

33. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) endorsed the recommendations of ACABQ on the importance of improving the division of labour between the three new departments that had been established under part IV and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It also attached great importance to the view

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(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

of ACABQ that the decentralization measures announced by the Secretary-General for the near future would affect not only the regional commissions but the regular programme of technical cooperation as well.

34. With the aim of improving the division of labour, the functions of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development needed to be reviewed and clarified. The area of food was one example: although paragraph IV.20 of the ACABQ report referred to furniture and equipment, the substantive problem lay not in administrative details but in the division of labour between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Department. With regard to the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, his country agreed with Egypt that preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development, which was held only every 10 years, were at a crucial stage and, therefore, reducing the resources allocated for that purpose could not be justified. The Advisory Committee's recommendation to reduce the provision for consultants and experts in relation to transnational corporations should be closely scrutinized. In the view of Colombia, it would not be cost-efficient to have an in-house capacity to deal with the many issues involved.

35. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that the Advisory Committee had recommended that the six additional posts requested by the Secretary-General under section 9 to work on micro-economic issues should be provided by redeployment within the Department. The recommendation appeared justified on the whole, but the Committee should have additional information on the subject from the Secretariat before it took a decision.

36. The Secretary-General clearly intended to give a new impetus to his restructuring of the economic and social sectors, and his proposals were in the interest of many countries concerned with issues of micro-economic development, especially the countries whose economic systems were in transition. The proposals rightly gave special attention to such questions as privatization, demonopolization, administrative deregulation of economic activities, pricing mechanisms, and the expanded use of market mechanisms. It would be interesting to know whether by means of redeployment the Department could find Professional staff members with a knowledge of micro-economic analysis and research experience in the field, for it was most important to ensure that the activities were successful.

37. Mr. JU Kuilin (China) said that section 8 covered very important economic and development issues for the developing countries. As CPC had noted in paragraph 89 of its report, the Department's activities were of high priority, and the Secretary-General had argued that it had not been allocated sufficient human and material resources in comparison with other departments. It was surprising that the Advisory Committee should have recommended reductions in the programmes and some justification for that recommendation from its Chairman would be welcome.

38. In paragraph IV.11 of its report, ACABQ recommended a reduction of $1,641,400 in the provision for the ad hoc secretariat on desertification. The

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(Mr. Ju Kuilin, China)

Chinese delegation would like to know whether the activities in question were planned to last for one or two years; and if for two years, whether they would be adversely affected by the reduction.

39. In paragraph IV.12 ACABQ expressed the view that the cost for three international conferences in 1994-1995 was high and that the number of participants should be limited. The conferences in question were very important, especially the Fourth World Conference on Women, and delegations from all countries should be able to participate. With regard to the latter conference, which would be held in Beijing, the Chinese Government had already done its utmost to ensure the maximum participation, and CPC had in fact noted that the conference should be given financial support.

40. The work of Habitat was very important for many developing countries and the post of Executive Director should be filled at the assistant secretary-general level.

41. The failure to finalize the integration of the Office for Project Services into the Department for Development Support and Management Services had created an unsettling situation. China hoped that a solution to the issue would be found soon. It was also concerned about the proposal to transfer the World Food Council secretariat to New York because it might adversely affect the good coordination existing among the organizations based in Rome. It would also like to know whether the Council's original mandate had been cut back.

42. The Advisory Committee's recommended reduction in the allocation for ESCAP was puzzling. In view of the increase in the importance and scope of economic and trade activities in the region, ESCAP should in fact be strengthened.

43. Mrs. Emerson (Portugal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

44. Mr. NDOBOLE (Uganda) said that the Ugandan delegation supported the many previous speakers who had endorsed the Secretary-General's assertion that there could be no democracy and lasting peace without sustainable development. The task was to express that assertion in budgetary terms.

45. Generally speaking, Uganda endorsed the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the international cooperation for development programmes. However, with regard to Habitat, it drew attention to table 12B.3, which showed a provision for a post at the under-secretary-general level; the post of Executive Director should not be downgraded to the assistant secretary-general level, for the activities of Habitat were very important, especially in view of the forthcoming Habitat II Conference.

46. The Ugandan delegation welcomed the improvements made in the presentation of section 15 on the Economic Commission for Africa but thought that the narrative could also be improved. The growth rate of 2.6 per cent for ECA indicated in paragraph 15A.5 was too small and represented only new programmes. The new programmes were certainly welcome, but the continuing decentralization of activities meant that the regional commissions were also being entrusted with

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(Mr. Ndobole, Uganda)

other new tasks without the necessary allocation of additional resources. The MULPOCs must also be strengthened because of their importance for programme delivery.

47. The provision made in paragraph 15A.42 concerning a grant to UNAFRI was welcome in view of the Institute's financial problems, as was the grant to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) referred to in paragraph 15A.22.

48. The proposals concerning the poverty alleviation subprogramme were appreciated, but the resources allocated were not commensurate with the activities to be undertaken. One of the best ways to increase awareness of the United Nations at the grass-roots level during the Organization's fiftieth anniversary would be to implement successfully programmes for alleviation of poverty.

49. With regard to section 13 on crime control, in its resolution 1993/32 the Economic and Social Council had requested the Secretary-General to allocate the necessary resources for the organization of regional preparatory meetings for the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. However, section 13 made no provision for a daily subsistence allowance for delegations from the least developed countries attending regional preparatory meetings. Uganda was to host one of the meetings and wanted to ensure its success. Most of the countries of Africa were least developed countries; without adequate financial assistance it would be difficult for them to participate effectively in the preparatory work and in the Congress itself.

50. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors and to the functioning of the regional economic commissions, and, broadly speaking, endorsed the pertinent recommendations of the Advisory Committee. India had supported the restructuring of the Secretariat in the economic and social sectors, and agreed with the Advisory Committee that the programmatic aspects relating to the creation of the three new departments and the ultimate structuring of those departments should be finalized.

51. While it was important to ensure coordination between the three new departments and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), that should not result in undue increases in expenditure on travel between New York and Geneva. His delegation regretted the decline in extrabudgetary funds and the stagnation in regular budget resources for economic and social activities.

52. He was concerned that the transfer to UNCTAD of the activities carried out by the former Centre on Transnational Corporations and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development had resulted in a downgrading of their importance. UNCTAD should establish a separate division for each of those two areas, and adequate resources must be made available for that purpose. In that regard he was surprised to note the surrender of a D-2 post formerly under the subprogramme on trade among countries having different economic and social

(Mr. Rae, India)

systems. The resources released by termination of that subprogramme should be reallocated in support of the new functions assumed by UNCTAD. Regarding section 11B, he trusted that further information regarding the review of the situation at the International Trade Centre would be made available before the end of the session.

53. His delegation supported the request for $1.3 million for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which must be provided with adequate resources. Lastly, his delegation supported the views of the representative of Uganda regarding section 13.

54. Mr. AVALLE (Argentina) said that his delegation had supported the decentralization of functions to the regional economic commissions as a means of improving the effectiveness of programme execution. Nevertheless, he noted with concern that the move seemed not to be improving efficiency at the commissions, essentially because a corresponding delegation of political functions had not taken place. The two needed to go hand in hand.

55. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that economic cooperation among developing countries and regional cooperation were essential priorities of the General Assembly. Consequently, adequate resources must be made available under the relevant budget sections. It was important to ensure proper coordination among the three new departments established in the economic and social sectors, a point already made by CPC.

56. Regarding the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the grade structures of the secretariat of the International Year of the Family and of the ad hoc secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Desertification should be reviewed, he trusted that adequate resources would be provided to those two secretariats. In particular, his delegation could not support the Advisory Committee recommendation for a reduction in the provisions for the ad hoc secretariat.

57. With respect to section 9, he did not agree with the Advisory Committee that the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in September 1994, could be serviced by the staff of the Population Division. In view of the importance of the Conference to the developing countries, adequate resources must be provided.

58. Under section 10, his delegation would welcome clarification regarding the units concerned with natural resources and energy activities. He also wished to have clarification of the Advisory Committee's recommendation that a provisional amount of some $29 million should be approved. In that connection, the views of CPC on section 10 must be taken into account.

59. Turning to section 15, he noted that the economic and social development of Africa was a United Nations priority. The resources proposed were, therefore, scarcely adequate, particularly in view of the requirements of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In addition, the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres must be strengthened. In that

connection his delegation endorsed the comments of the Advisory Committee in paragraph V.11 of its report regarding redeployment of resources to ECA.

60. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that international and regional cooperation were among the priorities established under the medium-term plan, and he questioned whether the economic and social sectors were receiving adequate resources following the restructuring. In that connection it was important to ensure coordination at the programme level between the three new departments and UNCTAD.

61. His delegation could not accept the Advisory Committee's recommendations relating to section 9, in particular the proposed reduction in resources for the International Conference on Population and Development. Lastly, with regard to section 15, it was essential for ECA to be provided with adequate resources.

62. Mr. RANASINGHE (Sri Lanka) speaking on section 12, said that UNEP appeared to be producing certain publications that related to Habitat, a merging of responsibilities which he found difficult to understand. It would be preferable for the Secretary-General to maintain the distinction between the two bodies. Equally, his delegation did not understand the statement by the Secretary-General that, while senior management of those two bodies would be distinct, they would be placed under common direction. Further to the comment by the controller that the head of Habitat would be appointed as soon as the General Assembly had approved a post at an appropriate level, his delegation did not think that the Secretariat should establish conditions in such a matter, and, further, did not support the view of the Secretary-General that the level of the post should be downgraded. In conclusion, his delegation considered the provisions for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to be adequate.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
35th meeting
held on
Friday, 10 December 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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23 February 1994

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 126: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued) (A/C.5/48/L.8*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.8*

1. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh), Rapporteur, introducing the draft resolution on which consensus had been reached in informal consultations, recommended its adoption without a vote.

2. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria), supported by Mrs. GRAHAM (United States of America), speaking on a point of clarification, said that draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.8* reflected the calendar of conferences as approved by the Committee on Conferences in annex I of document A/48/32/Rev.1. After the Fifth Committee had completed its consideration of the calendar of conferences in informal consultations, the Committee on Conferences had received additional proposals on the draft calendar of conferences. Since her delegation had difficulty with some of those proposals, it was prepared to adopt the draft resolution on the understanding that the additional proposals would be considered by the Committee on Conferences at a later date and that the changes to the draft calendar of conferences would not be included in the Fifth Committee's report to the General Assembly.

3. Footnote 2 of the draft resolution should be amended to read "A/48/32/Rev.1, annex I".

4. Draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.8*, as orally revised, was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/48/6, A/48/7, A/48/16 (Part I and Part II) and A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/C.5/48/26)

First reading

Part IV. International cooperation for development (continued)

Part V. Regional cooperation for development (continued)

5. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that the restructuring of the Organization's economic and social sectors had been undertaken to redress the fragmentation of the structures of those sectors, provide a clearer focus for various components in the economic and social fields and achieve economies of scale. With respect to the economies of scale, the savings realized through the process of restructuring should be utilized in the respective field of activity and not be diverted to cover the expenses of the Organization's other activities.

6. With the resource growth in the economic field almost at the level of the previous biennium and the increase in activity anticipated in that field, his delegation hoped that the proposed level of resources resulting from the restructuring of the Secretariat would ensure the implementation of activities

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(Mr. Jadmani, Pakistan)

in the economic field. Moreover, the proposed programme budget should have allocated additional resources to meet the needs of the comprehensive programme for development.

7. Adequate resources were needed for developing countries that were implementing far-reaching economic reforms and liberalization measures. In particular, the desperate situation in Africa required urgent attention. A net flow of official development assistance (ODA) should be used for the eradication of poverty, human and social development programmes and measures to promote sustainable development in developing countries. In that regard, the Secretary-General's proposals on the subject should be approved.

8. The allocations proposed for the three new departments in the economic and social field should be authorized in order to ensure their proper functioning. If the desired objectives were to be achieved, coordination between the departments was essential. It was important to delineate the responsibilities of each department and define their relationship with the various agencies and funds of the United Nations system that were active in the economic field. The departments should complement, not compete with, each other.

9. His delegation shared the concerns expressed by the representative of Egypt with regard to the funding of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, in particular the resource allocation for the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development. The Department should provide a link between the various departments and bodies at Headquarters and the regional commissions. His delegation was in favour of an analysis and evaluation of the Department's activities and therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal in subprogramme 5 of section 9.

10. His delegation shared the concern expressed by the representative of China that the level of resources for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was not commensurate with the Commission's expanded workload.

11. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) said that his delegation fully supported the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on the need for enhanced coordination among the three new departments, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the regional commissions, as well as for a clear division of labour among their various units. Part IV was not presented in the context of a long-term plan or framework for the restructuring of international cooperation for development, and his delegation hoped that the launching of an agenda for development would help overcome that shortcoming.

12. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development required adequate services and resources for the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis should improve coordination with the regional commissions and the Secretariat should provide additional information

(Mr. Damico, Brazil)

on the economic and social information system. His delegation supported the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) concerning the incorporation of the Office for Project Services (OPS) into the Department for Development Support and Management Services.

13. With regard to UNCTAD, his delegation regretted that clearly identifiable units had not yet been established to deal separately with science and technology for development and transnational corporations. His delegation supported the view of ACABQ that the Secretariat should report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/212 B (III). In addition, a corrigendum should be issued to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 in order to amend the title of programme 17 to "Science and technology for development", and that of subprogramme 1 to "Endogenous capacity-building and resource mobilization".

14. With respect to the International Trade Centre, his delegation drew attention to General Assembly resolution 47/212 B, which called for the prompt appointment of an Executive Director of the International Trade Centre.

15. Finally, with regard to Part V, his delegation looked forward to the Secretary-General's report of the Secretary-General on decentralization.

16. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his delegation strongly supported effective coordination among the three new departments. His delegation was not in favour of the exclusion of the regional commissions from certain across-the-board reductions, since by their very nature such reductions could not be selective.

17. It seemed that more than 95 per cent of business travel in North America was booked on coach or discount fares and that the choice of lodging had been reduced considerably to include mostly budget and economy hotels. The Secretariat should explore the possibility of following that practice and should report on its findings in due course.

18. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that the Secretariat should inform the Committee on the status of negotiations or actions with a view to incorporating OPS into the Department for Development Support and Management Services. Likewise, the Chairman of ACABQ should inform the Committee whether any negotiations had been held or any specific recommendations had been made on that important issue.

19. Her delegation regretted the decrease in extrabudgetary resources for activities in the economic and social fields. The Secretariat should consider the possibility of financing certain posts that were currently financed from extrabudgetary resources, from the regular budget, particularly in the case of section 4, where specific proposals on the subject had been made.

20. With reference to paragraphs 10.26 to 10.28 of section 10, her delegation considered that paragraph 10.28 was superfluous and should be eliminated in so far as it reiterated the request made in paragraph 10.26.

21. Mr. VARELA (Chile) said that his delegation fully supported the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/48/16 (Parts I and II)) and attached particular importance to the work of CPC and ACABQ in the budgetary process. It also agreed with the statement by the Group of 77. If necessary, greater flexibility could be achieved through dialogue but should not be sought by relaxing budgetary procedures and regulations. In that connection, his delegation welcomed initiatives to improve the United Nations system in accordance with existing regulations and with the participation of all Member States.

22. Given the scope and complexity of economic and social assistance and cooperation it was necessary to take a long-term view during the budget exercise. Human resources must be strengthened, even though it might seem a waste of scarce financial resources. His delegation therefore had difficulty understanding the Advisory Committee's recommendation (A/48/7, para. IV.18) that the proposed additional posts for activities in micro-economic issues should be deleted, particularly since it seemed that assistance to the developing world in micro-economic issues would be more necessary than ever. It would also have difficulty agreeing with paragraph IV.25 concerning the reduction of financial resources for an event as significant as the International Conference on Population and Development. It shared the concerns of the Egyptian delegation and would appreciate more information in that regard.

23. His delegation supported the view expressed by the Colombian representative concerning paragraph IV.38, which recommended a reduction in financial resources allocated to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It was reassured by the Controller's statements regarding coordination among the three departments in the economic and social sector as a result of the restructuring exercise. His delegation also supported the strengthening of activities in the regional commissions. It was deeply concerned by the decrease in extrabudgetary resources allocated to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the impact that would have on the Commission's activities during the biennium 1994-1995. The Secretariat's assessment of the potential impact would be appreciated.

24. The fact that an Executive Director of the International Trade Centre had still not been appointed gave cause for concern. As the Centre played a valuable role in promoting more just and equitable trade with nations, his delegation noted with satisfaction the Controller's remarks and trusted that expediting the appointment process would prove effective. In conclusion, while his delegation advocated budgetary discipline, it none the less understood that the Organization's heightened responsibilities in the promotion of economic and social development called for a corresponding increase in resources for that sector.

25. Mr. JU Kuilin (China) said that the Chinese translation referred to the Executive Director of Habitat as an assistant secretary-general post, when it should have been under-secretary-general and requested a correction.

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26. Ms. SAEKI (Japan) said that her delegation supported the views of CPC and the Advisory Committee on the importance of effective coordination and eliminating duplication between the activities of the three new departments established under the restructuring in the economic and social sectors and UNCTAD. It also shared the concern expressed by ACABQ in paragraphs IV.6 and IV.7 about the proliferation of ad hoc secretariats for intergovernmental bodies and the costs of international conferences. In that connection, the Advisory Committee's recommendations contained in paragraphs IV.12 and IV.14 concerning the criteria for inviting individuals to conferences and the staff requirements for conferences, respectively, were appropriate. Her delegation also believed that substantial cost reductions could be achieved by streamlining the United Nations publications in the social and economic fields. There was potential for duplication between the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the activities of the other two departments in the economic and social sectors, UNCTAD, and the Bretton Woods institutions. The Department must focus on its areas of strength in order to achieve a more effective and economical utilization of resources. Her delegation also supported the reduction proposed in paragraph IV.21 of the ACABQ report.

27. Until such time as the issue of transferring the Office for Project Services (OPS) had been settled, the budget of the Department for Development Support and Management Services could not be considered. If the issue took time to settle, the interim situation would have to be dealt with in the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the case of OPS and in the General Assembly in the case of the Department.

28. Reductions could be made in UNCTAD in the area of consultants and experts and publications. No clear explanation had been given on how the transfer of programmes on transnational corporations and science and technology to UNCTAD had resulted in economies of scale. Her delegation requested the Secretary-General to review the posts and resources mentioned in paragraph IV.41 of the Advisory Committee's report. Japan attached importance to United Nations activities in the field of crime prevention and control. In that connection, the administrative support mechanism and the role of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna must be strengthened and streamlined.

29. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to Committee members' questions concerning restructuring and reorganization, noted that as the Secretary-General had indicated to the Committee on 24 November, the Secretariat was entering a phase of consolidation, in which new structures must be given time to work. The report of the Secretary-General on high-level posts (A/C.5/48/9) should be viewed in the context of that consolidation. The report outlined the Secretary-General's response to concerns expressed by Member States on the basis of the revised estimates. It was important for the Committee to approve the Secretary-General's proposal for the 1994-1995 biennium. Major changes in the Secretary-General's proposals contained in the budget fascicle would create difficulties.

30. Replying to a question concerning decentralization, he said that programmes on natural resources and energy were still pending. Despite great efforts, it had been impossible to complete the inter-secretariat review, which covered departments at United Nations Headquarters, UNCTAD, the United Nations

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Environment Programme (UNEP) and the regional commissions, each of which had their own views concerning programming and resources. The comprehensive inter-secretariat review would be expedited and it would fully take into account the views expressed by the General Assembly. The results would be presented through CPC.

31. Replying to the Cuban representative, he referred to the report of the Secretary-General on restructuring (A/C.5/47/88, para. 26), which indicated that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would be responsible for the preparation of an annual policy report. The report was intended to present integrated and policy-oriented views on the world state of affairs in the social and economic sectors for consideration by Member States. It would draw on various sectoral surveys and reports prepared by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, UNCTAD, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNEP. Replying to another question by the Cuban representative, he said that, at its resumed substantive session of 1993, the Economic and Social Council had decided that the Committee for Development Planning should meet for three days in January 1994. At the same time, the Council had before it a draft resolution calling for a Group of Experts on Development to replace the Committee for Development Planning. That would have no programme budget implications. Replying to the Cuban query concerning the proposed grant for non-governmental liaison offices, he said that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had approved the activities of the liaison offices as a project of the United Nations system and that the cost would be shared among participating organizations. A broader mandate was contained in General Assembly resolution 37/94 B on questions relating to information. In addition, many delegations had noted that Agenda 21 contained a special chapter on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in United Nations activities.

32. Replying to a question on how the functions of the former Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation were reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, he said that those functions relating to overall policy coordination, in particular coordination and implementation of major United Nations declarations, were programmed in paragraphs 8.44, 8.48, 8.49 and 8.50 under section 8 on the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Those functions relating to the coordination of activities of the United Nations system, including support to ACC, were programmed in paragraphs 8.87 to 8.89. Operational activities were also programmed in paragraphs 8.87 to 8.89. Issues relating to Africa in the context of programme 45 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 were programmed in paragraphs 8.128 to 8.132. Coordination of issues relating to hunger and malnutrition was programmed in paragraphs 8.51 and 8.52.

33. Replying to the Chinese inquiry concerning budgeting for desertification programmes, he said that desertification programmes under resolution 47/188 had been approved for one year. Non-post resources had been budgeted for 1994 only but, through redeployment, four Professional and six General Service posts had

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been budgeted for two years, making it possible to begin work in the current biennium. Approval was being sought on the basis of the Secretary-General's original proposal.

34. The Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis was continuing its existing activities and launching new activities at the same time. The six posts requested were for the Department's newly emerging activities based on General Assembly resolutions 47/171 and 47/187. The Advisory Committee was suggesting that the activities should be carried out through redeployment of existing posts (para. IV.18), but, in fact those six posts had already been redeployed during the current biennium. The request was being made in order to regularize the situation in the biennium 1994-1995. Obviously, an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of those activities should be conducted, but any disruption of work would be most unfortunate.

35. Activities pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/215 were not included among the activities proposed in paragraph 9.32 for implementation by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. The Second Committee was currently considering a draft resolution which requested the Department to carry out follow-up activities in that area. The activities proposed in paragraph 9.30 included research and analysis on micro-economic issues, while the activities proposed in section 10 in the context of programme 21 (public administration and finance) of the medium-term plan, which dealt basically with technical cooperation activities in relation to micro-economic activities. That division of labour had been approved by the General Assembly in the context of its review of document A/C.5/47/88. Replying to a question on increases in furniture and equipment in table 9.8 of section 9, he said that the resources would finance the cost of equipment for the United Nations economic and social information system (UNESIS), on which work had already begun in 1993, in addressing information and data issues in the social and economic sectors in an integrated manner, while maximizing the utilization of existing hardware resources. The system would require some specialized equipment in addition to normal maintenance and re-equipment of specific programmatic activities. The reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee would adversely affect the implementation of the information system and, consequently, the statistical services that could be provided to Member States.

36. The Secretariat was in general agreement with the observations made concerning the transfer of OPS from UNDP. However, many months had passed since the transfer had first been proposed and a great deal of technical work had been done in that connection. All the institutional administrative arrangements were complete and the transfer was scheduled to take place in January. Every effort had been made to ensure that OPS would enjoy the same flexibility in the United Nations as it had in UNDP. Postponing the transfer would have an adverse effect on the activities of OPS and would not help to clarify outstanding technical issues. In fact, those issues could not be resolved until the transfer had taken place.

37. Replying to another question, he said that in the new staffing table for the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the programme on

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energy and natural resources would be carried out by the Division for Development Policies and Planning. In his latest report (A/C.5/48/9 and Add.1), the Secretary-General was proposing to transfer the D-2 post to the Department of Administration and Management within the framework of the proposed adjustment.

38. Referring to posts shown under the programmes on transnational corporations and science and technology in section 11A, he said that a comparison between the number of posts and the level of resources allocated to the former Centres on Transnational Corporations and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development and those contained in section 11A could be misleading, for it did not take into account the redistribution of resources of the two former Centres during the first phase of the restructuring of the former Department of Economic and Social Development. During the second phase of the restructuring, a number of posts under those programmes were subsequently redeployed from the former Department of Economic and Social Development to departments other than UNCTAD. The overall level of resources proposed by the Secretary-General in section 11A for the two programmes had been determined after a careful review in order to ensure the full and effective implementation of those programmes. Referring to the administration of the programmes within UNCTAD, he said that the newly established Transnational Corporations, Technology and Investment Division provided for the maintenance of distinct units within UNCTAD. The organizational framework was designed to help eliminate duplication and certain weaknesses in programmes owing to fragmentation. The assignment of other closely related activities to the same Division would enhance the quality of the programmes delivered.

39. Many delegations had expressed the hope that an Executive Director of the International Trade Centre would be appointed promptly. The Secretary-General was undertaking a review of the Centre's programmes and administrative practices and the decision would be announced shortly.

40. Replying to questions concerning the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), he stressed that the budgets of Habitat and UNEP were administered separately, and that the two agencies would maintain their separate identities and have distinct senior management. As their activities were closely related, it had been determined that joint programming could result in maximum programmatic and administrative advantages.

41. The Secretariat shared the concern of many delegations about the impact of the declining level of extrabudgetary resources on the programmes of the regional commissions, in particular the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The problem stemmed from both the reorganization of the operational activities of the organs of the United Nations and the general decline in budgetary resources. The General Assembly had always maintained a strict policy concerning the absorption of extrabudgetary shortfalls by the regular budget. The proposal in section 4 concerning the financing of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations from both the regular budget and the Support Account for Peace-keeping Operations was not related to the issue at hand.

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42. Concerning ECA in particular, he said that measures had been taken to increase assistance to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and to guarantee the stability of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI).

43. Regarding the steps taken in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/67, he said that they were outlined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the statement on programme budget implications contained in document A/C.2/48/L.82. In particular, under section 20 of the proposed programme budget, a provision of $729,800 had been proposed for activities in the area of statistics. That would be utilized for building the institutional and technical capabilities of member countries (para. 20.51) and for the organization and management of data-processing and information systems development. It represented an increase over the 1992-1993 level of resources.

44. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said her delegation said that the approach taken in paragraph 9.30 of the proposed programme budget did not deal with all of the programmes under Agenda 21. She would take the matter up in informal consultations and hoped that the Secretariat would be able to make specific proposals at that time to rectify the situation.

45. Cuba attached great importance to the activities carried out by UNCTAD as well as those relating to science and technology and it had therefore been concerned to hear of staff reductions in those areas. It would like to receive written information concerning the situation with respect to UNCTAD resources and posts at the end of the first phase of restructuring and at the end of the second phase. While it had taken note of the Controller's comments, her delegation saw no apparent justification for the very meagre budgetary increases in those areas.

46. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) asked for clarification of how coordination was to be achieved among the three new departments. He also requested a preliminary answer to the question he had raised previously regarding the use of coach and economy fares for regular and peace-keeping travel.

47. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda) expressed concern at the absence of any provision for travel by delegations from the least developed countries to the regional congresses to be held in preparation for the Ninth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

48. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to the questions raised by the representative of the Netherlands, said that a first meeting of the three department heads had been held and that weekly meetings were planned. Coordination was also taking place on a day-to-day basis. With respect to travel arrangements, he said that the Secretariat continued to review the situation.

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49. Replying to the representative of Uganda, he said it was his understanding that provisions for such travel were included in paragraph 13.10 of the programme budget.

50. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should suspend its consideration of parts IV and V, and that decisions thereon and on the relevant recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be taken at a later state.

51. It was so decided.

Part VI. Human rights and humanitarian affairs

52. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the total estimates proposed by the Secretary-General for Part VI came to $128,770,100, while the Advisory Committee had recommended appropriations totalling $120,408,200.

53. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) pointed out that, in connection with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the budget included a provision for the transfer of two posts from extrabudgetary to budgetary resources. That was one of the very few exceptions made in the proposed programme budget to the general rule of avoiding that practice. The Secretary-General had requested 25 additional posts for the newly created department, but the Advisory Committee had not approved the establishment of some of its key posts. He wished to emphasize the great importance the Secretary-General attached to the work of the Department and to convey his request that the General Assembly approve the establishment of the posts.

54. Mr. STÖCKL (Rapporteur, Committee for Programme and Coordination) drew attention to paragraphs 175-206 of the Committee's report (A/48/16 (Part II)) noting that the Committee had stressed the importance of the work of UNRWA and recommended approval of the relevant proposals in the programme budget and of the programme narrative relating to humanitarian affairs.

55. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, and noting that promotion of respect for human rights was one of the principal tasks of the United Nations and that the General Assembly had specifically requested the Secretary-General, in resolution 47/213, to give particular attention to certain priority areas, including human rights, said that the Secretary-General's proposals were an initial step in the right direction. However, given the substantial increase in the workload of the Centre for Human Rights, the proposals, while significant in terms of percentage growth, were inadequate for, in dollar terms, they represented only one third of 1 per cent of the budget proposals currently being considered. Taken as a whole, the section itself represented a mere 1.5 per cent of the overall budget. Moreover, only 6 of the 27 Professional posts being proposed were actually new. The European Union therefore urged all Member States to support the Secretary-General's proposals and to endorse, in the General Assembly, his proposal to increase the resources allocated to the Centre in the proposed programme budget.

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(Mr. Maddens, Belgium)

56. The European Union looked forward to seeing the results of the World Conference on Human Rights and of the discussions currently under way in other forums reflected in the budget proposals.

57. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) said that the reasons the Advisory Committee had given for rejecting the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the staffing of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs were not convincing, and pointed out that the number of issues being dealt with by the Department had expanded considerably in recent years.

58. Mr. LOZINSKY (Russian Federation) said that the Secretary-General's proposals relating to the staffing of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs seemed justified inter alia because the new Department represented a consolidation of three units.

59. Ms. ROEDSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the Nordic countries attached great importance to the work of the United Nations in promoting universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Given that the demands placed on the Organization in that area were increasing, and that the recent World Conference on Human Rights had inter alia requested the Secretary-General to substantially increase the resources allocated to human rights programmes, it was a matter of concern to the Nordic countries that a number of programmes within the Centre for Human Rights, continued to suffer from a lack of adequate resources. Indeed, less than 1 per cent of the regular budget was currently allocated to the Centre.

60. The Nordic countries welcomed the efforts currently under way to streamline and rationalize the Centre. In view of the substantial increase in the Centre's workload, the Secretary-General's proposed increase for that section represented a bare minimum of what was required. The Nordic countries were prepared to support much larger increases than those currently proposed and they fully endorsed the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination that the increased responsibility and workload of the Centre should be matched by an increase in resources. It was regrettable that ACABQ had been unable to make specific recommendations on the matter. However the Nordic countries urged Member States to at least support the Secretary-General's proposals. Such support would be consistent with the resolution on the strengthening of the Centre which the Third Committee had adopted by consensus a few days previously (A/C.3/48/L.49).

61. The United Nations must respond without delay to the strongly felt international concerns in the area of human rights and corresponding additional resources must be provided as a matter of urgency. It was a matter of concern that, even with the proposed increases, the Centre would find it very difficult in the years ahead to fulfil the vitally important tasks which Member States had entrusted to it.

62. Turning to section 22A concerning the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), she expressed the view that the contribution to UNHCR from the Organization's regular budget represented the universal

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(Mr. Roedsmoen, Norway)

commitment of Member States to the statute and mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner. The Nordic countries were convinced that the Secretary-General's proposal to transfer two UNHCR posts in least developed countries from voluntary funding to the regular budget was appropriate and fully justifiable.

63. There was need for greater predictability in the financial situation of UNHCR, since the current uncertainty led to an ad hoc approach to assisting refugees and prevented the financing of long-term, durable solutions. The Nordic countries believed that regular budget funding would benefit the Office of the High Commissioner to a greater extent than would voluntary funding, and, given the increasingly complex activities which UNHCR was being required to undertake, they would have been prepared to support an immediate transfer of all of the 17 posts referred to in the Secretary-General's budget proposals.

64. Mr. ELZIMAITY (Egypt) said that there was need for greater balance between the elimination of poverty and support for human rights programmes. In that connection, his delegation was still awaiting a reply to its question concerning the volume of resources to be allocated to those United Nations agencies involved in combating poverty. In his view, the recommendation of ACABQ concerning the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) would have a negative impact on the work of that department. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposals which would permit DHA to effectively discharge its important responsibilities.

65. Mr. KOULERA (Ukraine) said that his delegation supported the draft proposals of the Secretary-General concerning the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

66. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda) supported the views expressed by the representative of Egypt on the need to balance the elimination of poverty and human rights activities. Although Uganda attached great value to human rights, it could not help but notice the extremely generous allocation of resources for human rights activities contained in the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget. He wished once again to stress the need for similar increases in the allocation of resources to combat poverty and promote development.

67. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that his delegation attached great importance to the activities of DHA, and particularly its coordinating role. It therefore believed that the recommendation of ACABQ to reduce the number of posts proposed by the Secretary-General for that Department would have a negative impact on its functioning.

The meeting rose at 5.45.p.m.